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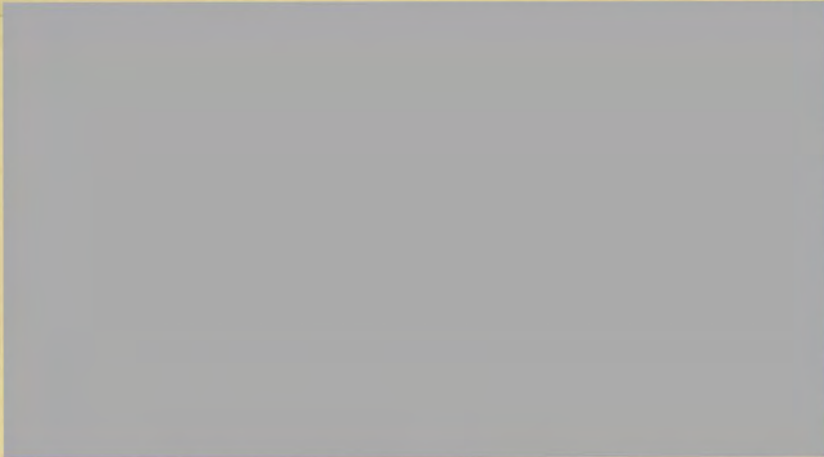
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Manuscript - Life and Death on a Tarmac - The Hijacking of PK326 by Jeffrey Balkind

Life and Death on a Tarmac:
The Hijacking of PK 326

- Manuscript by
Jeffrey Balkind

1994

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LIFE AND DEATH ON A TARMAC:

THE HIJACKING OF PK326

by **Jeffrey Balkind**

April 1994

LIFE AND DEATH ON A TARMAC: THE HIJACKING OF PK326

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PROLOGUE

What the hostages of Flight PK326 endured thirteen years ago in one of the longest hijackings on record was a small fraction of what Terry Waite and Terry Anderson later endured. Their land-based ordeal was entirely different from our air incident. The length of time and brutal conditions of their imprisonment makes comparison difficult. Nevertheless, surviving hostages share one trait: they have regained their freedom and are at liberty to recount the tale so that others might draw some lessons from it.

Life can be ephemeral -- grab it and it can elude you. Consider that one moment you are walking down a path. It may be a country lane, a city sidewalk, or an airplane aisle. You are minding your own business and wham -- the next moment you find yourself trapped in a life-threatening situation, in this case a hijacking. It is a surrealistic, dangerous incident, and one for which you are totally unprepared. The incident lasts for almost half a month -- a long, long time to have to spend in an airplane, or in any confined space. You try to gather your inner resources as you struggle to get through the days cooped up inside the plane. You have no alternative for you have to survive, if not for yourself then for your next of kin. Fortunately, you find out that the limits of your endurance are far greater than you ever imagined, having had it put to the test.

Imagine that a decade later you are again going about your business and quite unexpectedly you are thrown back into re-living the original incident, the one that you thought you had effectively put behind you. Your memory is stirred and your emotions churned, again and again ...

That was the situation in which I found myself, first in 1981 and then in 1991. In retrospect, ever since my hijacking occurred in 1981, I have been fascinated with it because of its historical significance -- some of the key figures important in Pakistan's past and present history are part of the story itself. In this regard, I have long been aware of the broader significance of this hijacking, but chose not to air it

until enough material had found its way into the public record. Since that has happened during the past year, it is now possible to write the full story as it occurred.

To some extent, it is like watching an ongoing story being played out before one's eyes thirteen years after the original incident. And it may well be that the complete ending will be written by Pakistan's criminal courts, especially the Sindh High Court in Karachi and the special proceedings on anti-terrorism. Pakistan is one of the few third world countries to have a fairly independent legal system, free from executive or legislative interference. One can only hope that it remains that way.

There have been many different kinds of hijackings: short, innocuous ones versus long, dangerous ones; simple ones (a free trip to Cuba in the 1960s) versus complex ones loaded with political agendas. The story of PK326 falls into the latter category. Because the tale is so unusual, and because it is based on what I witnessed inside the plane, as supplemented by published reports and interviews that I conducted of key participants over the years, I have chosen to use the real names of people and places, rather than contrived names. All the facts are true to the best of my knowledge. During the incident I had a "conversation" -- if one can call it that -- with the lead hijacker that lasted several hours, which provided me with some of the rare information contained in the story.

The story is written through my perspective, but it includes the point of view of other key participants. The only area where I have taken some license is in the dialogue, since I do not have a transcript or recording of everything that was said during the thirteen days inside the plane. Consequently, I have had to rely mainly on my memory and on published interviews and records of press conferences at the time. Of help was the use of English, in addition to Urdu, on board the plane.

There are many aspects to a hijacking: negotiations, double-talk, and recriminations. The mind-set of a hijacker is intriguing, and to the extent that I have learned something about his psychology and motivation, I have attempted to convey it. However, what interests me the most is what goes on inside a hostage's mind: his fluctuating emotions, the various viewpoints and counter-viewpoints with

which he is buffeted, and any changes in his deeply-held beliefs as a result of the incident. If I am able to provide a glimpse of these things, then my purpose in putting pen to paper will have been served. And if through the process of disseminating this information I am able, indirectly, to save the life of someone who happens to get trapped in a similar situation as I was, my task will have been doubly served.

My gratitude is owed to Peter St. John, Director of the Center for Counter-Terrorism in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, who invited me to spend several days with him and his associates to exchange views on aspects pertinent to this story and to the broader topic of air piracy and airport security. May the excellent work of this center and the few others like it in the United States, the United Kingdom and Western Europe continue to make the world of air travel safer in the years to come.

Washington, D.C.

April 1994

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This book is dedicated to my wife and son who gave me the encouragement that I needed. Their advice was always invaluable, as was that of my dear friend Saideh Pakravan, daughter of the late General Hassan Pakravan. General Pakravan was Iran's first military attache to Pakistan after the partition from India, and later returned to Islamabad as Iran's Ambassador to Pakistan when Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was Foreign Minister. As a result, Saideh grew up in a setting in which I only set foot a half-dozen times. Nevertheless, any errors of fact or interpretation rest entirely with me.

I also wish to acknowledge the invaluable role of Peter St. John, Director of the Center for Counter-Terrorism in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, who shared his deep knowledge and insights with me.

But without the cool head of Jim Theodores and many others, I might not be here to express these thanks, so no words can capture the gratitude owed to them.

PRIME-MINISTERIAL FLASHBACKS

May 22, 1991

I was passing through the Philippines on this night. It was not just any night, but one that is remembered well in India's history -- the tumultuous part of its history. Sometime after midnight, in my bedroom in the stately, colonial Manila Hotel, I was awakened by what appeared to be a bright flash in my room. It seemed as if a tremendous explosion had gone off in my room. I soon realized that I had experienced an exceedingly violent dream in which I had been blown up into tiny fragments by a powerful bomb. The details of the dream are unimportant, but what became significant to me is that the dream occurred just after I had heard that Rajiv Gandhi, Prime Minister of India, had been blown up while attending a political rally outside Madras. He had been decapitated and his body shattered into hundreds of pieces by the force of a bomb strapped to the torso of a female terrorist. The woman, along with seventeen of Gandhi's followers, ^{were} ~~were~~ also killed.

Earlier in the evening, I had seen those horrifying images being replayed every hour on the CNN News. I tried to fall asleep but could not do so as my mind kept on going back to another terrorist incident: the hijacking of a Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) jet in 1981 to Afghanistan and Syria. I had been caught inside that plane for thirteen days. Part of me had forgotten the incident -- at least that is what I told myself -- while another part had barely begun to come to grips with the experience. My mind tripped back a decade, away from India to a country so similar, yet so different: Pakistan.

It was not the Gandhi family that preoccupied me on this strange night, but Pakistan's Bhutto family: former Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto; his daughter Benazir Bhutto, who only six months earlier, in September 1990, had been ousted from her first stint as Prime Minister (at the time, she was

(ii)

the Muslim world's first female political leader); and his son Murtaza Bhutto, whose whereabouts were generally unknown at the time. In October 1993, Benazir Bhutto regained power and, a month later, Benazir's brother, Murtaza, returned to Pakistan after having spent sixteen years in self-imposed exile in Syria.

What was the link between my violent dream, itself seeded in the political slaying of Indira Gandhi's elder son (in 1980, Indira Gandhi's second son Sanjay was killed in an aerobatics air crash, and in 1984 Indira Gandhi herself was killed by two of her palace guards, Sikhs) and the Bhuttos, who continue to dominate the political landscape in neighboring Pakistan. None other than that I had witnessed a man get executed ten feet away from me on the PIA airplane; and his slaying stemmed directly from certain events in the Bhutto saga. Moreover, I -- an ordinary citizen -- came within twenty minutes of being executed on the same plane, all because of a chain of events in a region of the world where political violence can flare up in a matter of seconds. It is a particular kind of violence driven by strong ethnic, regional, and cultural differences. While these things are not unusual in the world, this pattern has lasted longer in South Asia and is more widespread than in most other regions.

Word Count: 529

PART ONE: THIRTEEN DAYS ON A PLANE

PAKISTAN, AFGHANISTAN: CROSSROADS TO ASIA

CHAPTER 1

FACES IN THE CROWD

So many times one sees faces in a crowd, ... faces in a busy airport building, faces in a football stadium or concert hall, or faces of ordinary people sitting immediately across the table from oneself in a congested room. Some are staring, while others are being stared at, just as intently. Some carry blank expressions devoid of all emotion, while others appear so animated, revealing all kinds of secrets to the complex personalities that reside in the person.

But what's in a face that makes it so interesting -- a twinkle of the eye, a random smile, or an angry stare? And what is it that one finds in a Western face versus a South Asian or Middle-Eastern face, or a child's face versus an adult's face, that makes one able to remember the similarities and differences among people? Sometimes, merely because of the make-up or background of a particular face, that person finds himself (or herself) targeted for "special treatment" in a life-threatening situation, as happened in *Schindler's List*, for example. One remembers those faces; in a sense one never forgets them.

For me, one hundred and forty-eight faces are sketched with indelible ink in my mind, although six faces are much clearer than the others. You will see those faces, not quite in the same way that I did, but close enough nevertheless.

DAY ONE: Monday morning, March 2, 1981, Karachi

I woke up early in the morning to the beckoning calls of an Imam, his voice wafting out of the speakers atop the minarets of the nearby mosque. It was time for devout Muslims to attend their morning prayers. Over the hotel radio, came the harsh shrill of martial music which was echoed by the clattering of soldiers' boots on the military parade ground outside my window of the Karachi Intercontinental Hotel. With its Islamic-designed central portico, large windows, and resplendent Persian rugs gracing the marble floors, the hotel had a certain sense of safe luxury.

I went downstairs to take a walk. Perhaps because I was making my thirteenth visit to Pakistan, I subconsciously tried to press the elevator button for the thirteenth floor, but there was no such floor -- only floors twelve and fourteen. As in many other buildings, the designers of the hotel did not want to confer bad luck on any guest. Dealing with reality in Pakistan -- a country that had experienced more than its fair share of turmoil -- was enough of a challenge for the occasional or frequent visitor.

On returning to my room, I watched the attenders at the mosque hurry out of the dilapidated building. I thought fondly of Rabbi Cohen, who in a couple of weeks would be delivering his usual

freedom-from-bondage Passover sermon at my local synagogue in Washington, D.C. It was too early in the day for me to have any serious thoughts about religion, so I concentrated on getting my bags ready for the half-hour ride to the airport. Little did I know that soon I would be thinking about God and human bondage in a manner that I never imagined possible before.

Outside, it was like any other Karachi day in March, a steaming 95-100 degrees with little breeze from the Arabian sea's tradewinds. Although it was still early in the day, the sidewalk already felt like a Turkish bath. I looked around for a taxi and saw only rickety junks that passed for cars in this part of the world. Still, I was late and took what came. As I bounced around in a cab that had no shock absorbers to speak of, the previous night's curry tormented my system. I gasped for air out of the window; all I got were diesel fumes. Ramshackle stores juxtaposed with modern office buildings receded into the distance.

It was noon when I arrived at the domestic departures building for my flight to Peshawar, in the North-West-Frontier-Province, some 800 miles north of Karachi. Other than for the cab ride, I felt in good shape as I was able to sleep-off most of my jet-lag the day before. The line at the check-in counter was moving at a snail's pace, so I had time to read the morning's Pakistan Times. Benazir Bhutto's efforts to rebuild the Pakistan People's Party took front page, while another article reported on the military government's steps to quell rising unrest in the country.

My shirt was damp; it must have been over one hundred degrees in the hall, crowded and with no air conditioning. The atmosphere was stifling. Things were more chaotic than usual since a large group of migrant workers had just arrived from the Gulf and were waiting for their connections. Some sat on the floor, while others propped up the wall as they played cards and chewed tobacco, spitting it out on the bare floor. A woman rushed by and almost tripped over the outstretched legs of one of the workers; he hardly noticed her. I waited my turn in what barely passed for a line. People jostled others to get ahead, while parents shouted instructions to their children.

A Pakistani man tried to push by, bumping into me in the process. He stopped, turned around, and stared angrily at me, as if I had been the one to bump into him. He was a handsome man, with dark brown eyes, a smooth complexion, straight black hair that flopped on his brow, and a long moustache that curled upward toward his refined nose. Dressed in a dark brown shalwar kameez (long shirt and pajama-style pants), he cut quite a presence. Following closely behind him were two other men, each dressed in a blue shalwar kameez.

One of them called out something that I could barely make out (I could recognize a few words of the local language, Urdu):

"Acha, Alamgir ... acha."

I knew that the name Alamgir meant conqueror (gir) of the world (alam) and that the name stemmed from Persian influences. Something about the man -- his face, his stance, or his expression, struck a discordant note in me. The two men with him were not as distinctive looking, one being short with cold blue eyes, and the other tall and stocky with brown eyes. They too had moustaches, although not as long as that of their compatriot. The three men soon walked away, their hands held stiffly at their sides.

At last, it was my turn to approach the check-in counter. I passed the agent my ticket but kept my passport, as this being a domestic flight, I felt no need to show it. The computers were down, so the agent had to scan the printed list for my name. Then he looked at a crumpled scrap of paper containing some additional handwritten names, possibly of people who might have pulled strings at the last minute to get on the "fully-booked flight".

"I see your name. You're in Seat 2A. I need to look at your passport to see when you entered the country."

I passed him my United Nations laissez-passer, the blue travel document that serves as a passport for officials of all U.N. organizations. He scanned the visa and the Karachi entry stamp. Next, he turned to the personal information page. He looked puzzled.

"There's no nationality stated here. What is your nationality?"

"Ahh... South African." I felt awkward. Since South Africa and Pakistan had no political relations, I would not normally disclose my nationality unless I had to.

"I need to see your national passport."

"Sure, it's the green one," I responded, slipping the document over the counter.

He leafed through the pages. "Have you just come from South Africa?"

"No, Washington."

He wrote "S. A." after my name. At the time, I did not realize how critical these two initials would be in the coming days. I kept my briefcase containing my personal documents with me and checked my suitcase into the hold.

::

Craig Clymore, a muscular six-foot three, bearded, 24-year-old from Laguna Hills, California, inched his way towards the front of the security line. He was impatient and slightly anxious. He wanted to get through the procedures as quickly as possible for he had a lot on his mind that needed to be sorted out before the takeoff.

Clymore had been in Pakistan for several weeks already and had been unable to make contact with several of the people he needed to meet. His line of business, if you can call it that, was lucrative. He was excited to be visiting Peshawar again, as it was the center of the "poppy triangle", a vast area of heroin production that stretched from Pakistan into Afghanistan. Pakistan was the largest producer of

heroin in the world and Peshawar was the main trading area. Visiting the northwest portion of Pakistan was like going west during the California Gold Rush. The only difference was that the heroin trade was illegal, even though rumor had it that many police and provincial officials were in on it. One could not tell a real dealer from an undercover agent, and an honest policemen from a crooked cop, especially if one was a foreigner like Clymore.

"Gringo" they would call him, when Clymore met his associates in the narrow alleys of Peshawar's Quissa Kahani Bazaar. They would kid him about being so American and naive. Gun dealers, small-time hashish dealers, druglords and robber barons -- they were all alike. They liked to do business with the American and European visitors; yet at some level they felt disdain and, without a second thought, would rat on someone.

Clymore felt worried as he waited in line. But if he had known what had taken place in the hills of Orange County, California just two weeks before he would have been greatly worried. On February 20, 1981, a federal warrant for the arrest of Craig Richard Clymore had been issued, charging him with masterminding a 16-month old multimillion dollar heroin-and-hashish-oil smuggling operation involving at least eight other people from Orange County. The warrant for his arrest was signed by the United States District Attorney in Los Angeles.

Clymore knew nothing about these developments, nor did his parents Glen and Thelma Clymore of San Juan Capistrano, a small town in Southern California. They had always tried to do their best for their son. Glen, a former merchant marine, wholesale liquor salesman, and stockbroker, and Thelma, his former childhood sweetheart and wife of 35 years, would have been devastated to know that their son was wanted by the U.S. Government on such serious criminal charges. But because the government feared Clymore would flee the country, it kept the warrant for his arrest secret. The elder Clymores were a clean-living, tennis playing couple, who had no inkling that Craig's penchant for mischief and poor judgement in friends had steered him towards drug smuggling. They believed that Craig was on

another business trip to Asia, buying shoes for his import-export business, the *Little-Big Foot Company*.

::

In the line near Craig Clymore, stood a chain-smoking Swede, by name of Eriksson. He was in his early twenties. Eriksson was aware that the Swedish police had recently visited his home searching for drugs. His landlady had sent him a distressed letter informing him that there was trouble afoot. Consequently, he did not know when he would return to Sweden, if ever. Meanwhile, Pakistan had been good to him. His local contacts proved fruitful and he could get ample supply, including the high-grade stuff. He felt that he ought to check out Peshawar, the Mecca of his trade.

Slimly built, Eriksson wore a brown ski jacket and carried some camping gear with him. In case he made it all the way up to the town of Gilgit in the north, a quaint town on the way to K-2 Mountain further north. Eriksson loved adventure as long as he was in control. He did not feel quite in control now, as dozens of passengers were pushing and shoving to pass through security as departure time was getting near.

Lawrence Gordon Lome, a 32-year old Canadian, stood further back. He had been away from Canada for a long time. In 1975, Lome had been convicted of smuggling drugs and was sentenced to seven years in prison, which he began to serve in Dorchester Federal Prison in New Brunswick. In March 1976, Lome's grandfather died in Toronto; Lome was granted permission to attend the funeral. As he was being transported from his prison cell, he managed to escape from the guards and fled the country.

After about five years on the run, Lome, alias Lawrence Clifton Mangum Lome, felt homesick and weary. After having looked around Karachi, he was planning to check-out the local trade around Peshawar. The last thing in his mind was the notion that he would never get to Peshawar. Still, he was

anxious because he did not trust the safety of PIA's domestic flights; even the international ones made him jittery.

Lome wondered whether he had done the right thing to show the passport of Lawrence Clifton Mangum of Brooklyn, rather than another one that he was carrying with him. The advantage of using the Mangum passport, which he had bought cheaply from a source in Canada and substituted his own picture in place of the real Mangum, who lived in Brooklyn, New York, was that the first name matched his. He had found that fewer mistakes would occur when he was meeting with local "contacts" if he could use his own first name. The downside was that Interpol's computers could be clued in more easily. But the Canadian police had been unable to catch up with him in more than five years, so there was no reason to worry now. Besides, he was familiar with Brooklyn and could cover his disguise easily.

::

Further back in the line, Fred Hubbell, a young lawyer working in New York but raised in Des Moines, Iowa, and his wife Charlotte looked relaxed and free-spirited. They had straight-forward intentions: innocent tourism, savoring the joys of visiting mysterious places. They had long wanted to visit Asia, but not necessarily Pakistan. However, this was the first stop on their tickets and they thought that they might as well go and look at the Khyber Pass, located some 17 kilometers from Peshawar. The Hubbells had arrived in the early hours of the morning after flying all night from Nairobi. At first, they thought that they would rest at a hotel nearby Karachi airport. However, when they got the last two seats on the Peshawar flight, they decided to continue their journey and try to find some time in the Northwest Frontier Province to catch up on their sleep. After that stop, they planned to visit India and Thailand, and then head back to new York.

Dressed in blue jeans, button-down Oxford shirts, and brown loafers, with L.L. Bean backpacks in hand, Fred and Charlotte looked as if they had stepped out of an Ivy League college. He was tall and slim, with black hair; Charlotte was of medium height, also slender, and with curly, light brown hair. They had that eager look of first-time visitors written all over their faces, with no sense of worry. Just a mild look of irritation at having to wait so long in a noisy, disorderly line.

::

Just before the security section, I was approached by a bearded young man, who moments before had been strumming on his guitar and chanting the line in the song by Scott McKenzie: "Going Back to San Fra-a-n cisco ... with flowers in your hair." My memories of Woodstock were jarred by the abruptness of his question:

"Do you think we'll ever get on this plane? There are so many mutha-fuckers around here," he said, pointing to some soldiers who had entered the room in the far corner.

I suggested that he keep his voice down.

"I wouldn't swear like that here if I were you," I said. "People get roughed up pretty bad here, especially when you say such things about women."

"I get it," he said, "it's like *Midnight Express*. That tough Turkish prison guard slammed the American guy's head against the wall, all over a little hashish."

I remembered that movie and the Pakistani soldiers did not look at all like the thugs in *Midnight Express*.

He told me his name: Clymore, ... Craig Clymore.

"My friends call me crazy Craig," he said.

I asked him where he was from. Laguna Beach, California was the response.

"This line really pisses me off. I wish they would hurry up," he said.

He returned to strumming on his guitar. This guy is a bit spaced-out, I thought.

To the right of the security section two porters were carrying what looked like a sick man on a stretcher, covered by a large blanket. He was gasping for air. The porters hurried right by, shouting to the guards: Peshawar, Peshawar. No security checks were made of the man or the stretcher. I wondered why he was not being taken by ambulance directly to the plane.

Although I was mildly curious, I did not think anything further about the stretcher incident as I was interrupted by a woman in front of me, who was shouting in French. Apparently, she had been "manhandled" when frisked by some zealous female guards as she tried to connect with an earlier flight in the day. The aggrieved woman wondered why she was having to be frisked again and the guards were becoming agitated in not being able to convince her.

I tried to help out by explaining that the guards were only doing their jobs and that we should be glad for the extra precautions taken. The woman would have none of it, and stormed off towards a group of tourists, French as well, it seemed.

After a while, a strident voice came over the public address system but the speaker above my head crackled so greatly, that it was impossible to hear what was being said. Nevertheless, people started to shuffle towards the gate, so I got out my boarding pass. Clymore dropped his pass, grumbled, and soon found it.

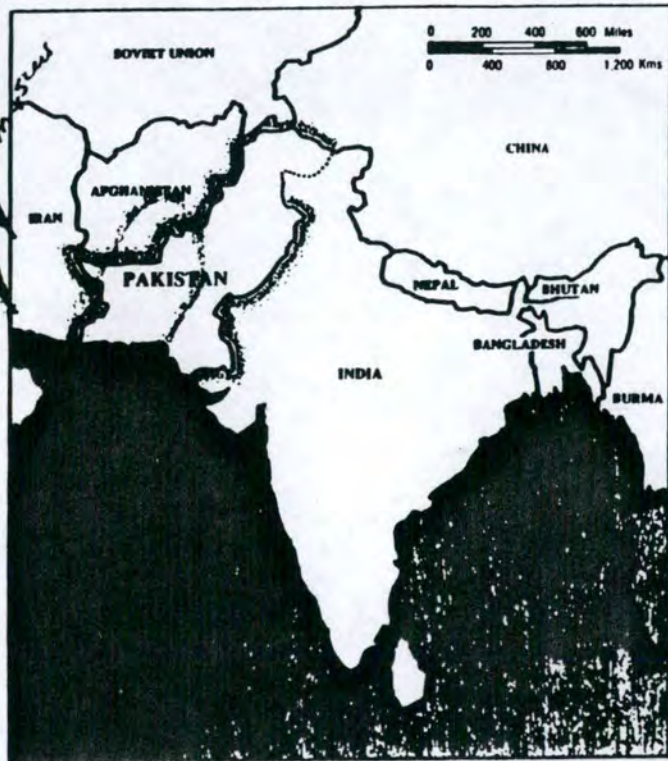
"What the shit, here it is, let's go, man."

::

Across the tarmac, the Boeing-720-B glistened in the sun. Soon it would be filled with 148 passengers and ten crew members. The last persons to board the flight would be Deborah Leighton

Weisner of Auburn, Maine, and her fiance, Mian Manzoor Ahmed, a Pakistani-born sheriff's deputy now working in Weisner's hometown. Weisner was visiting Pakistan for the first time to meet her future parents-in-law. The deputy sheriff, Mian Ahmed, had no idea that he was travelling with such exotic company: a Californian under federal indictment for smuggling high-grade drugs into the United States; an escaped convict from Canada with a criminal record in narcotics trafficking; and a Swedish youth who was also under investigation for smuggling drugs into his country. Not to mention the three moustachioed Pakistanis who, as it would turn out, had even more problematic backgrounds than the three foreign passengers who had come to Pakistan in search of drugs, guns, and a misguided notion of adventure.

Word Count: 3232



SOVIET UNIO

CHIN

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Muzaffargarh

CHAPTER TWO **THE TAKEOVER**

It is one thing to see violence on the screen, quite another to experience it first-hand. The feeling of shock is so great that it is difficult to comprehend what is happening before one's eyes. The inability to understand the full dimensions of the events only adds to the general scene of horror and confusion. As I look back thirteen years later, there was a clear pattern and plan to the hijackers' actions. Moreover, the reactions of the crew and the passengers conformed to the patterns that have been established in other hijackings. However, there were some important differences in our case, which stemmed from the fact that we had a full aircraft (in many other hijackings, the aircraft was not full) and were diverted to an airport in which reliable information was hard to come by.

Monday, March 2, 1981: 2:40 p.m., Karachi time

In the rear section of the aircraft, the Pakistani man named Alamgir reached under his baggy trousers and gripped the smooth barrel of his Colt 45 pistol. He pulled it out and tucked it under his seat. Next, he lifted a grenade from the bottom of his bag and tucked it inside his long shirt. He turned to his two friends seated next to him and ran over the plan one last time with them.

He had been biding his time, waiting for the best moment to launch the attack. Two facts were key; he wanted to wait until the plane was near the Afghanistan border; and he needed the seat belt sign to be on so that the number of passengers standing in the aisle would be at a minimum. A standing passenger represented an obstacle, while a seated passenger would be one less person to push aside when he stormed the aisle. He had waited until the plane was near the border because he feared interception by Pakistani air force jets. There was a large military base near Peshawar and he knew that it would take only a few minutes for the pilots to scramble their F-16s into the air and force the PIA plane down onto the runway, or to Rawalpindi airport, if necessary. Large contingents of jets were stationed at both of these airports, which Alamgir had to avoid at all costs.

The plan called for diverting the PIA jetliner to Kabul, a flight of some twenty additional minutes. Alamgir knew that it would take ten minutes to cross into Afghanistan's airspace, which was insufficient time for the air force to mount intercepting jets. In all respects, Alamgir had to preserve the

element of surprise. So he had to storm the cockpit as quickly as possible before the captain and his crew had time to get off a hijack signal.

From his science classes at Karachi University's Jinnah College, Alamgir felt that he had gained a certain sense of precision. He had gone over the plan countless times and was convinced that he could pull it off. He would run up front as quickly as he could, while his two comrades -- Nasir Jamal and Ali Butt -- would take the mid-section and rear section respectively. He was pleased that the plan called for going to Kabul not only because Afghanistan was a friendly state, but because he had friends waiting there.

At the check-in, Alamgir and his comrades had each used aliases. His real name was Sallamullah Khan Tippu, but for this flight he had checked-in as Mullah Khan instead. Nasir Jamal had checked in under the name Nasir Khan, but preferred to use the alias Rizwan. Like Alamgir, Jamal was a science student at Karachi University. The third member of the team, Arshad Ali Khan, had checked in under the name Ali Butt. The use of aliases gave them some feeling of comfort, believing that any police efforts to find them would be made more difficult as a result. The curious thing, however, is that their aliases were not very different from their real names.

One aspect worried Alamgir: the reliability of his two comrades. He didn't know Ali Butt nearly as well as he knew Nasir Jamal. He hoped that Butt would remain steady under pressure. From previous operations that they had mounted together, he knew that Jamal was as steady as a rock, which gave him a certain sense of reassurance as he could not know how long the siege would last, or whether it would be bloodless. He felt ready for any outcome, as long as it would achieve his goals. In the very least, he was going to embarrass that dictator, General Zia-ul-Haq; and in the very most, he was going to force Zia to release many prisoners, or freedom fighters. He was sure that he could pull the whole thing off and achieve his maximum goal.

As Alamgir prepared to load his gun, he hoped that blood would not be spilled, certainly

not his blood, but if this had to be, Allah would judge him to be a martyr. Death was noble -- it was the cause, the struggle, and the outcome that counted. This was all that mattered. Allah Akbar! Pakistan Zindabad (Long Live Pakistan), Alamgir chanted under his breath, thinking that the new Pakistan which he and his leaders sought would be quite different from the type of country which Zia-ul-Haq was carving out for the people.

Alamgir fingered his moustache to signal that he was ready.

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It was 4:00 p.m. and we were due to land soon. I looked up at the front-section flight attendant, who had picked up the microphone and was announcing our descent into Peshawar. I started to put my shoes back on and tie the laces.

Suddenly, I heard a loud bang, like gunshot. Then another. In the next moment, the Pakistani man who had bumped into me at the airport came running into the front section, brandishing a grenade and a gun. His eyes were red hot; his moustache bristled.

"Get up, get up!" he shouted in reasonably clear English. "Go to back of aircraft. Move!"

Instant chaos followed. I had no time to put my shoes on, scurried down the aisle, and was almost knocked over by other passengers, who shoved me in the back. Some screamed, others sat immobilized in disbelief. The children looked bewildered. One shouted "Papa, Papa ..."

"Go, go to back of aircraft!" This time it was the thin hijacker who screamed out the orders, in much cruder English. He repeated his command, and punctuated it with a smack of his hand against his pistol butt.

Naturally, not everyone could fit into the rear of the plane. The man brandished his pistol and lifted a hand grenade above his head.

"You see this? Move, move!"

Some women and children were crying, while their parents tried to calm them. Several passengers ducked and buried their heads in their laps. The lead hijacker motioned to people to sit straight and ordered the men to put their hands above their heads. Then, systematically, he and his two accomplices began moving more people to the back of the plane. Soon, about one hundred passengers were crammed into about ten rows in the rear of the plane. Forty people had no seats and had to squeeze into whatever space they could find on the floor or perch themselves on the armrests.

Male passengers were ordered to sit by the windows and women by the aisles. I later learned that this tactic is fairly common as men are more likely to have received military training than women and therefore might be more willing to try overpower the hijackers in the aisles. In our flight there were not enough women to fill the aisle seats, so some men were placed there as well; however, the majority of the men were forced to take window and middle seats.

The leader returned to the front section of the plane, shoving about ten people up the aisle ahead of him. Soon he came back towards us in the rear. Waving his grenade in the air with his left hand, he shouted "Move back, move back some more and get down! Get down!" He cocked his pistol as if he were getting ready to shoot.

He turned towards us. "All of you, lie down in the aisle, lie down in the aisle and do like you're told!"

We crawled onto the aisle floor, frightened passengers lying on top of each other, almost suffocating those below. A small boy wriggled free and shrieked loudly. At that moment, the burly hijacker walked up, stepped on my hand, and stuck his dirty shoe in my face. I tried to push him off, only to be find myself transfixed by the barrel of his gun pointing down at me. I lay still, my heart thumping. Next to me, lay Craig Clymore, the tall, bearded Californian. His long legs were crunched up and he cursed several times.

A deep voice came over the plane's intercom:

"My name is Alamgir. You keep still and listen. We are going to Kabul and Teheran. Sit still and obey my instructions, then you will not be harmed. You are our brothers and sisters in the struggle against oppression. Allah Akbar (God is great)." I heard the click of the microphone and then after a pause it clicked again and the same voice came over the speakers, this time in Urdu.

After another few minutes of Alamgir's monologue, silence descended. All I could hear was the heavy breathing of bodies around me. With several people lying on top of me, I felt as if I was about to suffocate. I had to get up, so I twisted my neck and raised my arm. The burly hijacker, who was in the rear of the plane at this point, came over and asked me what I wanted.

"I need to sit down. I need to get to my seat."

"Go there, go to last row. Go!"

He shoved me into the remaining window seat in the last row on the right side of the plane. The plane's right wing was dipping downwards. We were either changing course or the redistribution of weight, with all of the passengers in the rear, had possibly affected the aircraft's balance. I looked again; the wing had righted itself -- the redistribution of passengers could not have affected the aircraft's weight balance compared to the weight of fuel and the fuselage. So we had to be changing course to the right, northwards.

Alamgir and the third hijacker, the thin, sinister-looking one with the cruel lips, came to the rear. Alamgir put this man in charge of guarding us, while he himself returned to the front of the plane. The man's eyes were piercing. He waved his pistol with one hand and held his other fist high above his head.

"Allah Akbar!" he cried out, repeating it again and again.

Clymore, who had been docile up to this point, jumped out of his seat and lunged at the hijacker, who hit Clymore with his pistol. Clymore slumped to the floor directly in front of me, blood

oozing out of his left temple. He grabbed a handkerchief, tried to dab himself, and groaned loudly; then he lapsed into unconsciousness.

I looked around for the two flight attendants. The women, named Naila Raza and Farzana Sharif, according to their name tags, walked up and down the aisle, while the burly hijacker positioned himself in between them. The two women looked surprisingly calm. I later learned that PIA provided basic training to its crews on how to appear calm and not show panic in a crisis, even if they felt terrified. Some passengers continued to shriek, while others rocked their shoulders back and forth, as if in prayer.

Impressed by the apparent calmness of the flight attendants, I tried to rein in my emotions and collect my thoughts. Was this really happening or was I imagining it? I asked myself. I started to feel numb, so I pinched myself. It hurt. It was true -- I was indeed caught in a hijacking. This was no bizarre delusion.

Since most hijackings had proven to be short-lived affairs, I told myself that it would be only a matter of hours, perhaps a day at most, before we would be set free. That is, as long as our plane did not first crash into the Afghanistan mountains. My thoughts and emotions began to race wildly. Parallel emotions started to grip me: on the one hand I was terrified; on the other, I had often read about hijackings but never had any idea as to what they were like in reality. And here I was, caught up in one. I felt a strange sense of thrill.

But reality soon began to sink in. Alamgir had referred to Teheran as a possible destination. Perhaps Alamgir was wanting to move the plane to Teheran in the belief that the Government of Iran would be sympathetic to his cause, not that the Afghans would prove to be unsympathetic. I shuddered at the prospect of being trapped in Iran, given what the regime of Ayatollah Khomeini had done to fifty-two Americans recently. Fifty-two American hostages held captive for 444 days, more than a year of their lives, imprisoned in the U.S. Embassy building, blindfolded at times, without adequate

heat in the winter and no fresh air in the summer. Four hundred and forty-four days, a long, long time to have to spend as a hostage. It would take Terry Anderson to prove how relative everything became, with his seven years of incarceration as a hostage, seven years spent mostly in darkness and chains on a cement floor in Beirut somewhere.

It was only six weeks ago, in January 1981, that I had been one of hundreds of thousands of persons to line the streets of Washington as the Iran hostages were welcomed home. I remembered that wintry January day when President Reagan, as one of his first actions in office, delivered a resounding address on the importance of not succumbing to terrorism. Yet it was Jimmy Carter's administration that had worked out the basic elements of the embassy hostages release plan. Jimmy Carter, who had earlier failed so miserably in launching a mission to rescue the hostages when helicopters of the elite Delta squad got stuck in the Saudi Arabian desert sand. But after that debacle, the hostages had eventually come home to a chorus of parade bands and yellow balloons. Images of yellow balloons in front of my own house started to dance around in front of my eyes. Would a rescue mission come to liberate us?

At last, the hijackers told us that we could lower our arms from above our heads. I looked outside. The plane's wing had dipped and we were beginning to descend sharply. Were we about to crash? I pulled out the flight magazine and flipped to the page that contained a map of the area. I had been told that the PIA planes flying to Peshawar in the northwest and Quetta in Baluchistan typically only carried enough fuel to get to Islamabad as an alternative landing site in bad weather. Islamabad was about two hundred miles east of Peshawar, whereas Kabul was about the same distance, but to the west. Consequently, we would likely be carrying sufficient fuel to enable us to fly to Kabul, but not any further. Thus, a landing on the first approach would be required without circling the airport. The pilot's steep descent was either because he was trying to conserve fuel or he was preparing for a crash landing. Gone were the parallel emotions that had gripped me just moments earlier. Instead, raw fear took hold and it felt as though all of the blood drained from my face.

The faces of passengers around me were also pale as they too must have sensed the steep descent.

Far below, I could see the rugged mountainside and guessed that we were over Afghanistan. The terrain looked terrifying; jagged rocks jutted out from the snow-covered peaks. Even the Afghan and Soviet troops camping in the rugged hills had trouble negotiating their paths along the narrow, winding trails and were becoming bogged down. The Afghan guerrillas were more used to operating in this difficult environment. I looked at the mountainside more closely -- the chances of surviving a plane crash here were nil. I closed my eyes and started to pray.

Miraculously, the plane pulled out of its dive and flew horizontally. The engines were being subjected to alternating bursts of acceleration and deceleration. I assumed that the pilot was desperately trying to conserve fuel by gliding to the extent possible. Those minutes of flight were possibly the most tense that I had ever experienced to date. But I had yet to experience the real meaning of tension since our journey was just beginning.

Alamgir's voice came over the intercom.

"We are about to land in Kabul. Stay still!"

Alamgir entered our cabin. Staring at the barrel of his gun, I forgot for the moment to fasten my seat belt. Danger had become a relative concept. The hijackers did not take any seats for the landing and continued to patrol the aisles. Moreover, they forbade the flight crew -- purser, stewards and flight attendants -- from walking up and down the aisle to check that passengers had fastened their seat belts. Moments before we approached the runway, Alamgir returned to the cockpit.

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In the cockpit, Captain Saeed Khan and Copilot Junaid Younus had overcome their first

sense of shock when the hijackers stormed through the door and were concentrating on manoeuvring the aircraft into position for a safe landing. This would be no small feat. They had no flight map of the Kabul area, leaving them no option but to estimate the distance of the mountainside. Khan kept an eye on the fuel gauges. There were only a few hundred gallons of fuel left in the tanks, which would be insufficient for a repeat landing should he have to pull up from his descent for any reason. Khan knew how much fuel would get burned up if he had to try to ascend. He had to touch down onto the runway on his first attempt.

The Kabul Control Tower radioed in a set of brief instructions to guide Khan in, for his instrument-landing. The instructions included directions that after taxiing to the end of the runway, he should park the plane at the far left corner of the tarmac. Khan recalled how five minutes earlier, when he requested permission to land, the controller did not sound at all surprised, as if he was expecting the hijacked plane. Was there some sort of complicity, he thought? Khan prayed to Allah, threw Jounus a glance of more than the usual concern, and guided the huge weight of the plane down. Alamgir pointed his pistol to the corner of the runway and Khan taxied there. Military trucks and jeeps raced alongside the Boeing.

All through this time, the purser, Javed Bhatti, had been amazed that he was caught up in a hijacking. It was only the year before that he had been involved in another incident in which he tackled the lone hijacker around his waist. The hijacker's grenade exploded, killing him instantly. It also blew a huge hole in the side of the plane. Yet the pilot was able to land his aircraft safely even though he had lost cabin pressure. Bhatti, who miraculously was able to dive clear of the exploding grenade, earned himself a medal for bravery and was a legend in PIA.

Bhatti tried his luck again, this time by lunging at the arms of the burly hijacker, Nasir Jamal, who clubbed him savagely with his pistol butt. Bhatti reeled and fell to the floor. Jamal kicked him in the groin. Holding his grenade high above his head, Jamal cursed in Urdu and strode off. Bhatti

lay motionless.

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From my vantage point at the window, the city of Kabul below appeared to consist mostly of low, drab buildings laced with unpaved roads. The brown clay looked water-logged from melting snow. Military trucks moved slowly along the roads. Interspersed were a few tanks and armored personnel carriers -- equipment of the Soviet Union, no doubt. A couple of Ariana (the national airline) passenger planes were parked alongside the terminal building.

When the pilot finished taxiing to the end of the runway and shut his engines down, a sense of relief came over people's faces, thinking that it was the end of the ordeal. Some waved their arms and shook the hands of their fellow passengers.

Alamgir came down the aisle and stood at the rear door of the aircraft. After a few seconds, a van with a mobile staircase arrived. Someone turned the door handle and in walked a Soviet officer with a red ribboned hat. Two soldiers with AK-47 machine guns were asked to stay outside. Alamgir shouted something in Urdu, the Soviet officer shouted something else in Russian, and both men looked momentarily perplexed. Then the officer waved his arms and went red in the face. Through the window, I could see several Ariana ground staff running towards the plane. One of the men ran up the stairs, entered the plane, and started to talk earnestly with Alamgir in Urdu, from the few words that I could overhear. This went on for about three minutes with much hand gesticulations. Then the whole group, Soviets and Ariana staff, rushed down the stairway, the van backed up, and Alamgir, scowling, slammed the aircraft door shut again.

Next, he hurried to the front of the plane and disappeared into the cockpit. Soon his voice came over the intercom again and barked instructions in crude English:

"You people in back of plane, move to front! Find seats. Any seats. Sit down ... sit down! Say nothing to nobody. Now!"

As I needed to get control of my briefcase that held my worrisome passport, I wanted to regain my seat up front. However, the third hijacker, Ali Butt, pushed me backwards. He had obviously decided that his leader's instruction did not apply to me, nor to about a half dozen passengers sitting in the last two rows. We were going to have to remain in the rear, he said.

Alamgir continued in better English, as if he was reading from text: " We are the Al Zulfikar Organization -- AZO. We fight against the hated government of Zia-ul-Haq. In 1979 Zia hanged our leader, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. For this, he shall pay." He then switched to Urdu.

I could not understand the rest of the speech; by its tone, it sounded like an harangue. I knew enough about the life -- and death -- of Ali Bhutto to believe that Alamgir's threats were to be taken seriously. Bhutto's hanging in April 1979 had stirred the deepest emotions in the country. I had seen some of the unrest first-hand as I had been in Pakistan at the time; it left a deep impression on me. Bhutto had been convicted of conspiring to kill a political opponent, although the evidence was largely circumstantial and some say fabricated by Zia-ul-Haq's police.

On this plane, therefore, I had the most ominous of thoughts as to what might be our fate at the hands of people working for the AZO, which sought to overthrow Zia-ul-Haq's regime. The AZO was known to resort to violence. The Government and much of the media considered the AZO to be a terrorist organization. That grab-bag phrase did not mean much, as there were many different kinds of terrorists -- political, criminal, and crazies. It was still too early to tell in which category Alamgir and his comrades fitted.

Alamgir concluded the Urdu portion of his speech and left us to sit in silence. It was by now almost dusk. The aircraft remained sealed to outsiders. We were not allowed to get up out of our seats, except if one had to use the toilet. Those trips, which had to be kept to a minimum, were

accompanied by either of Alamgir's two accomplices, while he remained up front; if one of them was unavailable, you had to remain seated, consequences and all.

The routine was usually the same -- once permission was granted to get up out of your seat, you walked slowly down the aisle, with one of the hijackers following closely behind, his pistol shoved in your back. The other hijacker would stand about ten yards away, providing cover. I later learned that they worked together at all times because they feared that there might have been a disguised security agent on board who would have sprung on them if they operated alone.

Every time I walked down the aisle, I looked at all of the passengers to see if anyone fitted the profile of what I imagined such an agent to look like -- male, dressed in a shalwar kameez, and carrying a gun underneath -- like Alamgir; alternatively, he could be dressed in a suit -- that is like at least a dozen of the passengers; or he could look like a returning migrant worker and be carrying his gun inside his blanket under the seat -- like any of the fifty such persons on the plane. It was impossible to identify an agent; yet I clung to the hope. If only I could identify such a person, I could try to forge an escape or counter-attack plan with him. At least, it would bring me out of the isolation I felt.

I focussed on the male passengers as I assumed that PIA did not employ female security agents in possible combat roles. That practice was confined to El Al Airlines, to the best of my knowledge.

As I stood by the toilet door worrying about all of this, I looked into the thin hijacker's cold eyes; he showed no expression. I shuffled my feet to relieve my stomach pains, aggravated by having to wait endlessly to be processed like an object in the toilet line. Psychological stress compounded the physical pain, making it difficult to disentangle the one feeling from the other.

When eventually my turn came to use the toilet, the hijacker stuck his heel inside the door so that I could not close it. He repeated, "Don't do anything foolish! You hurry!"

Sitting in the toilet with the door kept ajar, the feeling of being a hostage became a harsh reality. One could not even have a crap in private anymore. As I left the cubicle, I looked through the

windows on both sides of the aircraft; there was no activity outside. The Soviet soldiers, who had arrived on the scene briefly, had vanished. It appeared that we were being left alone.

There was no moon outside and the distant airport building was dark. Inside the plane, all three hijackers walked incessantly up and down the aisle, on patrol, weapons drawn. Overhead, the night lights glowed weakly in the aisle, their yellow streaks shrouded in cigarette smoke.

Word Count: 4526

CHAPTER 3

BATTLE STATIONS ONE: THE CRISIS GOES NATIONAL

As soon as word of the hijacking got out, the alarm bells rang. In Karachi, Islamabad, Rawalpindi, and Washington, communication command posts were set up and people were sent to their battle-stations. Clear lines of command were essential for handling the crisis; yet experience on the ground was thin. The search for the right expertise to handle the crisis went beyond the normal channels and reached out to persons who knew the situation first-hand, though crisis management may not have been their normal line of work. The complexities of dealing with different time zones, foreign languages ((Urdu, Russian, and Afghani dialects), and differences in attitudes towards risk-taking made the situation unpredictable and potentially disastrous.

Monday, March 2, midnight, Kabul Runway

Captain Saeed Khan was distressed as he sat in the cockpit with his copilot, First Officer Junaid Younus. Alamgir sat behind them with the radio microphone in one hand and a pistol in the other. This was the first hijacking that Khan had experienced and he was alarmed, given Alamgir's statements about wanting to revenge the hanging of Ali Bhutto. In some irrational way, Khan felt responsible for what had occurred, even though it was not his fault. He was the skipper and as such was accountable for everything that happened on his aircraft.

Khan, thirty-eight years old, was one of the youngest captains in PIA's cadre of pilots. Younus was a year younger. Khan was proud of the four stripes on the epaulets of his shirt, compared to the three on Younus. Both men had learned to fly in the Pakistani air force. For some years now, the government had been downsizing the military in the aftermath of the 1971 war with India over independence for Bangladesh, so the job with PIA that he had been fortunate to find was a valuable one. It provided him with attractive, interesting work and the pay was good. But he had not counted on something like a hijacking happening to him and he worried how he was going to handle things in the coming day or days whatever turned out. The proximity of Alamgir breathing down his neck unnerved him so much that any thought of sleep was futile.

Although younger than Khan, Copilot Younus had as much flying experience as his captain. He was calmer than Khan, as was his temperament throughout most of their flights together. Younus loved to fly -- the sky was heaven for him, especially at 35, 000 feet. Being held a prisoner in his own cockpit was a new experience for him; it made him feel more angry than scared. He wanted to attack the hijacker, but he had seen the wound left on Javed Bhatti's head, which gave him ground for caution. Clearly, Alamgir and his two fellow hijackers were not to be taken lightly.

Monday, March 2, 1981, 8:00 p.m., Karachi

David Mead, a lawyer from the World Bank in Washington, picked up the phone in his hotel room at the Karachi Intercontinental Hotel. It was Wolfgang Siebeck, the head of the Bank's Islamabad office, on the line. Siebeck's tone of voice immediately indicated that something was amiss.

"David, ... Jeff Balkind's been hijacked. He was supposed to come brief me on the results of his trip. But he had to go to Peshawar to meet with the Northwest-Frontier-Province officials on that small-scale industry project he had negotiated last month. I've just had word that the plane landed in Kabul about a half hour ago."

David's legalistic mind went into high gear: "What do you know about the hijackers?" he asked. "Who are they? What are their demands?"

"General Rahim Khan's office called me to say that the hijackers have not said what they are seeking yet. But the Defense guys think that this isn't one of those silly pranks; the hijackers mean business. Things are confused right now. Something about releasing a whole bunch of prisoners. Fat chance Zia will ever agree to that! Please call me in the morning."

Mead was not about to hang up. "Tell me anything more that you know."

Siebeck knew little more at this stage. To the best of his knowledge, all of the passengers were unharmed.

Mead enquired if Washington was informed. Siebeck told him that he had just finished talking with my boss, Malcolm Rowat. Given the unrest in the country, they felt that that it was just a matter of time until some incident occurred, not that they thought that it would be a hijacking. Malcolm said that he would call my wife Gwynn right away.

"Do they have children?" Siebeck enquired.

"No," Mead said. "This situation is bad enough already."

Mead felt helpless, as if he was cut off from the action in this island oasis, the Intercontinental Hotel. He knew that it could easily have been himself who was on that plane (although he did not tell his wife that), as just the evening before he and Jeffrey had talked about possibly flying to Pesahwar together. But he had to finish up discussions with the Justice Department in Karachi regarding the Sindh High Court's decision on arrears owed by industrialists to the local development banks. Now, Mead had something else to worry about, something he had not quite expected.

He turned on the television channel (the only channel), which was in the midst of the nightly news. The announcer was talking about the day's Cabinet meeting which had addressed the rising tide of violence in the Sindh province. The announcer looked down at a note that had been slipped to him. The T.V. screen then flashed an image of a PIA plane. The announcer began to read:

"We regret to announce that at 4:15 p.m. today three armed men overpowered the crew of a PIA plane while it was on its way to Peshawar and diverted the aircraft to Kabul." The picture on the tube then moved to a full-frame, blurred image of the hijacked plane apparently photographed in Kabul itself. The announcer continued: "the Government of Afghanistan is reportedly trying to resolve the situation (a glimmer of disbelief showed on the newscaster's face). The voice tensed up.

"A PIA spokesman has just reported that officials monitoring the situation have established contact with the hijacker, who has identified himself by the name Alamgir. It is unclear how many hijackers are on board, but reports say that it could be as many as six. The 148 passengers and ten crew members are reported to be unharmed. The plane was commandeered when it was over the town of Mianwali. The pilot was heard to say that an armed man had entered the cockpit and demanded that the plane be flown to Kabul. Latest reports from Kabul indicate that the hijackers are insisting that dozens of prisoners be released from jails in Pakistan in exchange for the lives of the passengers and crew. We will provide an update later tonight."

Mead switched off the T.V. and called his wife again.

"The government will likely resolve things quickly" he kept repeating to her. However, he did not tell her that "quickly" in Pakistan didn't necessarily mean "peacefully".

Mead became more worried as he listened to a report on Radio Pakistan. Unlike the T.V., there was something so impersonal about the radio that it deeply bothered him. Perhaps it was because of the anonymity of the announcer's voice. He tried to turn in for the night, but it was hopeless. So he turned to his book *Freedom at Midnight* dealing with the 1947 partition and independence of former British India. Millions of Hindus and Muslims had died in the carnage that followed independence and as many as eighty million persons cross-migrated between India and Pakistan. Freedom had come to South Asia but violence had not gone away.

Monday, March 2, 1981, 8:00 a.m., Washington (6:00 p.m. Karachi time)

When news of the hijacking reached Washington, it was still early morning because of the ten-hour time difference between eastern standard time and Pakistan time. My wife Gwynn was still unaware that something serious had occurred. Yet she felt something nagging at her from within but could not quite put her finger on it.

Gwynn left our house in Georgetown and strolled down the streets to her job, also at the World Bank. The morning air was crisp, so she wrapped her coat around her a little tighter to keep out the winter chill. Her long, blonde hair, blew around in the wind and her eyes took on the hue of the deep blue morning sky. Gwynn thought of me, sweltering in Karachi's street traffic and was glad to be where she was.

Gwynn knew the routine so well. After all, she would do the same on her trips, only that the muggy Jakarta's streets would replace the dry Karachi ones. The smell of air pollution was the same, however, that particular mix of diesel fumes and kerosene flames that gave the air its heavy, dense feel. In all, it was like a third world blanket of cloud cover, with seldom a bright blue sky to look at. Washington was more blessed as a city, or was it the army of bureaucrats regulating the catalytic converters who had to get the credit?

Gwynn was pleased that it was her turn to be home. These long trips took their toll and she was looking forward to the day, next week, when I would be returning. She was in a happy mood as she strolled past the numerous bookstores and coffee shops that lined the streets. In the five years that she had lived in Washington, she had come to like it, although she missed the history and traditions of her home town Philadelphia. For Gwynn, a birthright Quaker, Washington was too transient a city to match the feeling of her Quakerly home town.

As she crossed into Pennsylvania Avenue, the melodious tone of the bird whistles reminded her that spring was only a few weeks away. Soon the Cherry Blossom Parade would come down these streets and the empty sidewalks would be filled with hundreds of thousands of people trying to catch a glimpse of the winning floats and media personalities. But for now, the rays of the early morning sunlight sparkled through the naked branches, waiting for the change of seasons to occur.

Gwynn walked faster down the street, preoccupied with issues that still needed to be resolved in the complex negotiations between the Bank and the Government of Indonesia on a possible water

supply development project. She arrived at the main building on the stroke of nine and disappeared into the labyrinth of corridors. From her office on the ninth floor, she could see the top of the Old Executive Office building, next to the White House, but this morning she didn't have time to enjoy the view. The eight-man Indonesian Delegation had just arrived from Jakarta and she had to get things underway for the first session of loan negotiations.

Within minutes, Gwynn was interrupted by her secretary. "David Hopper wants to see you right away." Gwynn was perplexed. As the Bank's Vice President for South Asia, David Hopper would not normally have any need to call her and since she had never even met him before, she got an uneasy feeling in her stomach. There had to be a special reason why he was calling for her. She rushed over to the adjacent building. As soon as she arrived in Hopper's outer-office, a grave-looking secretary ushered her in immediately.

Canadian David Hopper, a tall, burly man with a cheerful face and a commanding stance, put out his hand tentatively towards Gwynn, as if he was partly introducing himself and partly trying to put a comforting arm around her shoulder. Such tentativeness was uncharacteristic for him, a man who was well-known for his bone-crushing handshakes and enthusiastic bear hugs, especially to those he knew well.

"Gwynn, Malcolm Rowat was trying to call you at home earlier this morning but your line was busy. I have some bad news for you. It's about Jeffrey." Fear gripped Gwynn as she braced for the worst. Her eyes widened as if she was trying to see what was coming. All of her attention was focussed upon Hopper's words.

"As you know, Jeffrey was in Pakistan. He was about to fly up to Islambad." There was an awkward pause as he groped for the words.

Why is he using the past tense? Why is he saying "about to"? Gwynn asked herself. Oh my god, Jeffrey is dead, he's dead! His plane must have crashed, she thought.

Hopper continued, "Gwynn, I don't know how to tell you this, but Jeffrey's been hijacked."

"Hijacked? Thank God he's been hijacked! I thought you were about to tell me that he had been killed in some awful plane crash somewhere -- so he's alive... he's alive!" she exclaimed.

Having broken the news, Hopper could relax. He continued:

"The authorities are doing everything possible to secure a quick release. Martijn Paijmans is in charge of all aspects for the Bank. Be patient, Gwynn. That's all we can do....be patient. It takes a lot of patience to deal with this region."

Hopper had learned this through many years of having lived in India, as well as having been a former head of the Development Research Center in Ottawa where he was responsible for approving or rejecting hundreds of research proposals from around the world. Proposals from India and Pakistan often took the longest to process and bureaucratic delays were common.

"Let's hope the Pakistanis deal with this situation differently," Hopper said. "Yes, we need patience. But we will also need to have some decisions from Islamabad. The ball is in their court."

Hopper waved his hand as though achieving this would require only good luck and sound timing from the bureaucracy, setting aside the moral issue of whether one should negotiate with terrorists to begin with. He turned to Martijn Paijmans, Vice-President for Personnel, who had entered the room just as Hopper was completing his tall order.

"Any new word, Martijn?"

"None. I've just finished talking to Siebeck. The government is going into a high alert mode."

Hopper continued, "Gwynn, if I may call you that, if there's anything -- and I mean anything - that I can do, please don't hesitate to call me. Meanwhile, I want to assure you that we are in touch with the latest information from every conceivable source -- the U.N., the State Department, and Pakistan itself. You won't be left in the dark, I assure you."

Hopper shook Gwynn's hand several times before he let go with a protective pat on her elbow.

Gwynn stumbled out of the room, not knowing if it was winter or spring, morning or night -- her mind was a total blur. Hijacked! It sounded so ominous, like something that happened to people in violent movies, not to anyone she knew, least of all me. It could not be the case, but that's what Hopper had said: hijacked!

Gwynn straightened her blouse and suit jacket, tried to convince herself that the Pakistanis were likely to resolve things soon, and returned to the negotiating room. The Indonesian faces across the table from her did not seem like the same ones that were there when she had left the room before. They were now just faces in a crowd, a multitude of expressions with no individuality registering with her.

Gwynn looked at her note-book. All she saw were images of a green and white PIA plane. The leader of the Indonesian delegation said something but all Gwynn could hear were David Hopper's somber words, as she struggled to come to grips with the situation.

She shuffled the papers in front of her and tried not to show her clenched hands. The second person in the Indonesian delegation, the Governor of Surabaya, said; "Jalang, jalang, there are many streets in Surabaya that need paving. We need to agree on matters soon. Ms. Davies, what do you think? You seem concerned about something."

"No, it's nothing really. I agree with your position on these issues."

Gwynn could not bring herself to reveal what was really preoccupying her. She forced herself to concentrate on the discussion at hand and pushed the PIA plane to the rear of her mind, as though it was being shoved to the corner of a tarmac by a tow vehicle. Gwynn wished, in fact prayed, that I was not inside the hijacked plane. There had to be some mistake, a case of mistaken identity. From time to time, passports and air tickets were stolen and therefore someone could perhaps be travelling with my stolen papers in that case? But if so, where was I, Gwynn asked herself? Had something else

happened to me, like an abduction or something worse? And why was Wolfgang Siebeck so sure that I was on board the hijacked plane? Gwynn's mind raced around with a myriad of questions and no answers.

Gwynn was determined to not bring her crisis into the negotiating room. All her life, she had been brought up to handle crises with a positive and outwardly upbeat attitude. But try as she might, she could not shut out from her mind the image of that PIA plane, as she recalled the time when she had stopped in Pakistan to see me while enroute to Jakarta. As a woman, she had felt quite uncomfortable walking in Karachi's streets and remembered the occasion when a taxi driver's sharp stare unsettled her to an extent that she had not experienced in any other country. Was that stare a premonition of sorts, a glance into the future of something ominous that had now confronted her just two years later? She closed her eyes and tried to shut out the frightening images.

Tuesday March 3, 1981, 9:00 a.m., Karachi (11:00 p.m., Monday night, Washington time)

The copy of the Pakistan Times, which David Mead pulled out from under his hotel room door, contained a front page article on the hijacking that included a full list of the passengers aboard PK326. Sure enough, there was my name, right on top due to the alphabetical listing. Mead called Wolfgang Siebeck in Islamabad, who was reading the same article. After updating each other, Siebeck said: "It says here in the Pakistan Times article that the Afghan authorities tried to enter the aircraft, but the hijackers sent them away."

"I don't have that aspect in my article," Mead said. "Why is that?"

"The Pakistan Times is published in Islamabad, so we get the latest edition here. I'll send you the page."

Siebeck had to rush off to a meeting (not on the hijacking as several Bank missions were in town), so he hung up.

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In the operations room at PIA headquarters in Karachi, the task force that had hastily been assembled was poring over the names of the passengers. Policemen from Karachi's Central District, as well as from the office of the Secretary of Defense, were trying to reconcile the various names with the limited information that they had at their disposal. The officers were perplexed. The lead hijacker had used the name Alamgir, but he had also identified himself in one of the broadcasts as Salamullah Khan Tippu. The police records indicated that Salamullah Khan Tippu was responsible for the killing of a student at Karachi University. According to the file, he was also responsible for planting the bomb at Karachi Stadium just two weeks earlier, on February 16, 1981, that nearly killed Pope John Paul on his visit.

The officer in charge reported that the hijackers were demanding the release of ninety-two political prisoners, some of whom had been detained in connection with the Karachi Stadium incident and the killing of the university student. The officers were outraged as they did not see any way that such a large number of prisoners should be freed. Such a step would wreck all of their painstaking work over the past few months.

In Rawalpindi, the older twin city to the more modern Islamabad, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had set up an operations unit of five persons to handle the crisis. The job of that unit was to stay in close contact with PIA headquarters, the Karachi Airport Control Tower, and other government offices in Islamabad and Pindi. Rawalpindi was a busy, noisy commercial city, whereas Islamabad, some 20 kilometers away, was a quiet, serene federal capital designed by the French architect Le Corbusier and built as a model new city. Neat rows of spaciouly laid out houses and elegant embassy buildings lined the wide avenues. There was also much green space, a rare commodity in Pakistan.

The run-down taxis and scooters that shuttled between the two towns provided cheap, efficient transport for civil servants who could not afford to own a car. Some had arrived at work early that morning ready to face the crisis; they had been alerted by pre-dawn phone calls, at least the few who had working phones. The offices were already in a state of high alert.

Strangely, the moods of the officials in Karachi on one hand and Rawalpindi-Islamabad on the other, matched the edifices of the buildings in which they worked -- the government bureaucrats up north in Pindi and Islamabad acted slowly with careful, deliberate movements as though time was on their side, while the airline officials in Karachi in the south rushed around, not quite in a frenzy, but with a sense of clear concern. In PIA's Karachi Central Office, crisis managers were appointed, whose main job was to relay to the concerned Government officials all of the messages that kept on streaming into Karachi Airport's Control Tower.

Inside the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Rawalpindi-Islamabad, officials were trying to hammer out a joint negotiating position to present to their ministers who would take it to President Zia-ul-Haq. The officials were not about to be rushed into any hasty moves or false steps. The chief of the Rawalpindi operations room best summed up the prevailing view: "Soon the hijackers will grow weary. They will surrender, just wait and see."

However, this approach was not working, as nothing had been heard from the hijackers since their first communication on landing at Kabul. For several hours, the radio had ceased to receive any transmissions and the officials had been informed that the hijackers had sealed the doors of the plane. A message came in from Kabul that the hijackers had cut off all communications.

It was the Control Tower at Karachi that emerged as the main nerve center for management of the hijacking situation, because the plane had departed from there and also because the greatest capacity for handling such crises rested in Karachi, capacity in terms of basic communications equipment and human expertise. The most experienced police officers tended to be stationed in and

around Karachi, as the Sindh province was experiencing the greatest number of violent incidents. The province had long been a flashpoint for trouble and unrest. Crime was rampant and political violence was known to erupt in seconds.

The army, on the other hand, stationed its most experienced officers in the Punjab closer to the border with India. Punjabi soldiers dominated the army's upper echelons of the military, many of whom had graduated from Sandhurst College. In some ways, they were more British than the British, and their stiff upper lips were accompanied by immaculately trimmed moustaches, just like that of President Zia-ul-Haq.

However, the army, police and PIA were just beginning to learn how to grapple with hijackings. Some of the officers had been trained in counter-terrorism methods. In the 1970s there had been a few incidents involving PIA planes, mainly flights to and from Amritsar in India. One of these in 1975 involved a Sikh terrorist carrying a ceremonial dagger.

Inside the Ministry of Defense building in Rawalpindi sat Major-General Rahim Khan, the Secretary of Defense and Chairman of PIA. Only minutes before, at around 8:30 a.m., Tuesday, March 3, Rahim Khan had been appointed as the Government's chief negotiator and spokesman for this crisis. Khan was a tall, elegant man with an imposing stare. He commanded a great deal of respect and loyalty among his staff. But that had not been the criterion by which the Minister of Defense, Mir Ali Ahmed Khan Talpur, had made his decision to appoint Rahim Khan as his crisis manager. It was because Rahim Khan was one of his most trusted men, someone who was well-experienced in crisis management and who straddled the two worlds of military and civilian operations. It seemed to Minister Talpur that considerations drawn from both worlds would be needed to steer a clear path through this explosive situation. The release of ninety-three prisoners was being sought by the hijackers -- and in his view there was no way that the Government should accede to this preposterous demand. He was going to hang tough, even if the conditions on the plane took a turn for

the worse. What could that be -- one life lost? Two lives lost? Three lives ... he didn't know.

However, what he did know was that Pakistan should never give in to terrorists. But Rahim Khan would not reveal this non-compromising stance to the hijackers when he assumed direct control of the crisis in Karachi.

Karachi had become the first point of contact -- the nerve center in which the arteries were the radio signals that emanated back and forth between the two control towers in Kabul and Karachi. Communications were not easy. Beside the static that existed on the radio lines, the Afghan authorities were turning out to be quite uncooperative. To some extent, this was to be expected, but not for PIA's overtures to be instantly rebuffed. So PIA's managers decided to call Major-General Rahim Khan in Rawalpindi and tell him that they needed his presence in Karachi urgently. On hearing about the lack of meaningful communications, Khan decided to fly to Karachi right away and take personal command of the negotiations. He called President Zia-ul-Haq, who was also in Rawalpindi at the time. After explaining the volatile situation, Khan was given full authority to carry out negotiations as he saw fit and to report back to the President's office when and as needed -- night or day.

Rahim Khan arrived at Karachi Airport in a military C-5 transport aircraft. Other army officers and equipment had been flown down to Karachi for a stay of service in the Sindh province. Khan was given a briefing and was hustled over to the control tower to talk more strategy with the other army officers and the PIA officials who were on the scene. So an uninspiring three-story building -- the Karachi Control Tower -- became the center of activity on the PK326 crisis.

It was not unusual for a high ranking official such as Major-General Khan to appear personally at Karachi Airport's Control Tower; what was unusual was that parallel "operations monitoring rooms" were established in Rawalpindi and Islamabad. Clearly, the Government of Pakistan was not taking any chances that it would be caught napping when some urgent, coordinated response might be

needed, whether or not it was the adoption of a particular negotiating stance or the planning of a more deliberate action like a SWAT liberation attempt. But while the plane remained in Kabul, any thought of a SWAT operation remained futile. The government was gearing up for a long siege. The path of carrying out intensive -- and at times deliberately protracted -- negotiations would be pursued in order to buy time while the government planned its next steps.

Word Count: 4646

CHAPTER FOUR

BATTLE STATIONS TWO: THE CRISIS GOES INTERNATIONAL

Until now, the crisis had been an essentially local story. When the international organizations found themselves caught up in this incident, they too mounted their communications battle-stations. But the responsibility for resolving matters lay where it always will be -- with the respective governments involved. However, on the plane, and unaware of the crisis management arrangements that were being put into place, I felt totally isolated.

Day Two: Tuesday, March 3, 1981, 6:00 a.m., Kabul Runway

The first light of dawn filtered through the windows and the aircraft aisle was bathed in orange and blue hues. The emerging day appeared to be crisp and cloudless, yet inside the plane it felt stuffy and claustrophobic. The streaks of early morning light entering the aircraft cut through the thick cigarette smoke. I wanted to clear away the smell of nicotine all around me. I had spent most of the night coughing and gasping for fresh air. The things that I used to take for granted were already becoming luxuries for which I would have traded my dearest possessions. Yet, as uncomfortable as I felt, this was the least of my concerns. My thoughts focussed on survival. I wanted to escape the plane as soon as possible.

The brightening light awoke the few passengers who were still asleep. Most sat rigidly in their seats, staring straight ahead. An eerie silence hung over us all. It was cold and I had no blanket to wrap around myself. My body ached from the lack of exercise and my head throbbed. The dial of my watch showed six a.m. I had last looked at it at three a.m., so I must have slept a while.

The day before at the check-in counter, I had almost begged for the last available non-smoking seat up front; now, despite my headache from the cigarette fumes, this seemed trivial. The day before, I could walk to the bathroom and not give it a second thought; now, that trip was a luxury to be indulged in only sparingly and under armed guard; the day before, I felt

a luxury to be indulged in only sparingly and under armed guard; the day before, I felt uncomfortably warm; now, I felt freezing cold inside the unheated plane; the day before, I had asked for a second helping at breakfast in the hotel; now, I hardly noticed that I had not eaten in more than twenty hours; and the day before I could read a book with abandon; now, I found it impossible to focus on the words. So much had changed. All I cared about was to be free to leave the plane. My worries had moved to a different scale entirely.

In the hazy light, I saw little movement except for the swaying of heads that stuck out from above the seats in front of me. Next to me, on the left of my temporary seat in the rear sat a man with deep furrows on his brow and a cigarette dangling from his lips. To his left sat a gentle-looking woman, presumably his wife, her hands cradled in his. Their eyes were wide open, their faces bewildered, and they shifted their feet constantly. There was no activity outside on the tarmac. Inside the plane it remained quiet, with no sound other than the shuffling of feet. It was cold and the shuffling helped to fight numbness.

The three assailants of last night were nowhere to be seen in the rear aisle. They might have been conferring up front. Their absence from the immediate area around me reinforced the strange feeling of being trapped in an unreal world. The notion that I was actually caught in a hijacking still seemed foreign. Not that I was unable to grasp what had occurred. All previous anxieties seemed trivial now. I told myself that I would be out of the plane soon. Just how soon, I could not know, but I imagined that it would only be a matter of hours since that had been the pattern of most hijackings to date.

It was now 6:30 a.m. I began to exercise my mind on a bit of mathematics, probability theory to be precise. What was the probability that I would have been the first World Bank person ever hijacked? The Bank has about 6,000 employees, most of whom travel overseas three times a year on average. Each itinerary consists of perhaps four to eight flights a trip. So I

would typically log about 50,000 miles a year. By 1981, the Bank had been in existence for thirty-four years and when a person visited, say, South Asia, his mission would involve at least four international flights and perhaps as many domestic flights. Multiplying these numbers together over the lifetime of the Bank, one comes up with a probability of less than one-in-a-million that I would have been the first Bank hijackee. And here I was, having "lucked out" of sorts. I should have tried the D.C. Lottery instead.

It seemed that my being partly flippant at this stage was my way of dealing with the danger around me, by not wanting to admit -- at least in the first twenty-four hours of the ordeal - that we were helpless to influence matters. Our survival lay in the hands of hijackers and government negotiators. Never before had I felt so dependent; it deeply depressed me.

I closed my eyes. I had never dreamt of being caught in a hijacking. When I dreamed of odd and dangerous situations, they usually took place in terrains or rooms that were unfamiliar to me, not in something like an airplane that felt like a second home. Hijacking images -- green and white planes with gold lettering, blue and white planes with the logo of a globe on the tail -- flooded my mind. Was it reality or was it a strange delusion that I was experiencing? For a moment, I did not quite know.

There was one way to find out. The previous night, soon after the hijacking had broken out, I had pinched myself to check if I was imagining everything. Now, even that action was a blurred memory. Recalling that I had a small safety pin in my shirt pocket, I took it out, opened the catch, and pricked my thumb. The feel, rather than the image of small droplets of blood, my blood, dripping down my hand convinced me that I was not dreaming. I was indeed a hostage inside a dark, crowded airplane, surrounded by strangers. I began to feel lonely -- lonelier than I had ever felt before.

Alamgir's voice came over the intercom in English: "You, our brothers and sisters, we not fight you. We fight government people. Some government people are on this plane; soon we find out who they are. Our enemies are American CIA agents who support Zia-ul-Haq. These people are like government people. We fight Zionism, racism, and imperialism...." He paused after invoking the hackneyed trilogy.

The better quality of Alamgir's English on this morning compared to the previous night led me to think that someone else had written the statement for him. But who? Who was behind this hijacking?

Alamgir continued: "We demand Zia-ul-Haq release 92 prisoners from Pakistan's jails. We are not afraid to take serious actions. I warn you not to try foolish things. We will blow this plane up and you inside. Do not move unless we tell you it is okay. We watch you all the time. No one can close toilet door. If you close door, we will shoot it down and you inside. We are freedom fighters. Join us in the struggle against Zia-ul-Haq. Zia hanged Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in 1979. Zia will pay for this."

Alamgir switched into Urdu. Of all the things he had said, I worried most about his reference to Zionism, racism, and imperialism. After Alamgir had finished speaking, I leaned over to the man on my left and asked him to summarize for me the gist of the Urdu portion to see if it clarified matters in any way.

Alamgir had said that the prisoners he sought were political prisoners. They had committed no crimes. Some were his family members who had been arrested in the middle of the night by Zia's secret police and had been tortured in prison. He reiterated that the struggle was not against most of the people on board the plane, except for the few government officials whose names he would soon find out. Also, he would weed out the American CIA agents, the Zionists and the racist people -- they all were enemies of the Al Zulfikar Organization. If there was no

progress in negotiations, then he would start killing passengers until Zia eventually agreed to the conditions. Death was noble for Muslims. He would be a martyr. The prophet Muhammad would bless his actions, so he had no fear. He would show Zia-ul-Haq that the government cannot continue to imprison innocent people.

The strange, parallel feelings in me grew. On one level, I became more intrigued. It was like watching theater on the tarmac, where the characters kept on entering and exiting the main aisle, while we -- the viewers -- occupied center seats.

On another level, I was scared, for it was not theater at all. Our lives were at stake, and given the diatribe that I had just heard, I felt especially vulnerable. I was determined to try to regain my seat up front as soon as I could so that I could be near my briefcase and protect my vulnerable passport.

This attempt proved hopeless. As soon as I stood up, Nasir Jamal, who had appeared during the middle of the speech, stuck the cold steel of his pistol barrel into my ribs. Then he walked away. I was desperate to use the toilet, so I raised my hand just as we had been told to do. The hijackers could not process everybody quickly enough, so some people suffered. I later found out that several of the older men, afflicted by weak prostrates, had severe difficulties. The hijackers gave priority to the women's requests, even though their needs might not have been as urgent as those of the elderly men. People were too proud to mention their disabilities and they suffered in silence, wet trousers and all.

The hijackers insisted that we keep the bathroom door open, in case we tried "to make" weapons or haul out a concealed item. When my turn came to use the toilet, I looked around: the cylinder on which the paper roll was mounted was too short to serve as a baton and the aerosol scent container was all used up to serve as mace; and the handtowels were too square to act as a blindfold, even if one could overpower a hijacker.

For a moment, I thought that on leaving the toilet cubicle, I would attack whichever hijacker was standing outside, like Clymore had done, hopefully with better results. This piece of imaginary heroics fell flat when I saw Nasir Jamal standing there, his pistol pointed straight at my chest.

I sat down in the rear seat and noticed that the tall Pakistani man across the aisle from me was fidgeting greatly. I glanced down. He had his hands toward the seat pocket and, while the hijacker's attention was on something else, he slipped his gold wedding ring into the pocket. He looked at me and his eyes narrowed as if to inquire whether I had seen what he had done. I didn't know whether my eyes showed any response, but my curiosity was certainly aroused. Why would he be trying to hide his wedding ring, if it were not to conceal his identity? After all, Pakistani traditions were not much different from western ones; people liked to inscribe their initials inside their wedding rings. And this could unwittingly reveal a person's identity in a risky situation.

I slid my wedding ring off my left hand and looked at the inscription inside -- JB:GD September 15, 1979, it read. The ring had been crafted just eighteen months earlier when Gwynn and I were married. Holding it now in the palm of my hand gave me a certain sense of comfort, as though life -- a joined life -- was being held safe in God's hand, not my hand. I slipped the ring back onto my finger and wondered whether Gwynn, who must have been informed of our situation by now, would be looking at her wedding ring in the same manner. Would her long, blonde hair be falling in wisps over her ring, as it sometimes would? My ESP told me it was, and I felt a warm current of electricity being conducted through the shiny, yellow metal on my finger.

But why was this other hostage hiding his ring? He must have believed that his ring, more importantly his identity, was a liability. I again leaned over to the man on my left and whispered: "Do you know who that man is, sitting across from us?"

He whispered back: "Yes, Tariq Rahim. He comes from a prominent family. I believe that he's in the diplomatic service. His father, a retired army officer, had recently passed away. So Tariq was, I believe, on his way to attend his father's funeral. We know some of the family members in Peshawar. I don't know exactly what position Tariq holds in the foreign service, but I hear that he's quite a big shot."

"And his late-father?" I asked.

"Oh, he was a bigger shot, having been Commanding Officer in East Pakistan before the region became Bangladesh."

"Ssh ... be quiet ... here comes Alamgir," I cautioned.

Alamgir walked over to us, turned to Tariq Rahim and said something to him gruffly. Tariq's face first turned red and then pale. His hands started shaking.

"Shut your mouth! You not speak!" Alamgir spat out the words. He then lifted his arm as if he was about to strike Rahim, but pulled back. There obviously was some history to this, something that had occurred between the two men earlier in their lives.

I turned to my fellow passenger and whispered, "Our leader appears to know this man, Tariq Rahim. What's going on here?"

Unfortunately, I could not get a response as at that moment the two other hijackers came on the scene and hovered over Tariq Rahim. He looked terrified. Alamgir then returned to the front and Nasir Jamal took up his position right in front of us, while Ali Butt stood to the side. They forbade all whispering, so my questions remained unanswered.

The sun's noontime rays were at their peak and there were no shadows under the wing of the aircraft. Inside, it felt like an oven and we still had not been given any food. The drinking water had also run out. The passengers were becoming extremely agitated, not yet accustomed to the realization that they were hostages whose every desire and need was subject to the whims of three hijackers. I felt hot, thirsty and hungry. Apparently, the radio contacts between Alamgir and the airport authorities were not producing results. Some glitch must have occurred that we were being left to languish inside the hot, dirty plane. Since the brief visit by the Soviet officers on arrival at Kabul last night, we had been totally neglected. Were they not aware of our condition aboard the plane? Was the strategy of the hijackers to refuse all offers of food and supplies so as to increase the stress level, so that this would force the Pakistani government to yield to the hijackers' demands.

Throughout the day, Alamgir maintained a determined -- at times fierce -- expression as he patrolled the aisle. Until now, I had thought that it was just a matter of hours until we would be freed. I became alarmed at the prospect of having to spend another day inside this plane. I found myself clenching my fist tighter and sitting more rigidly as I wondered when someone would show up to resolve this crisis.

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Tuesday, March 3, 1981, 9:00 a.m., Washington (7:00p.m., Karachi time)

Pajmans' office at the World Bank was frantic with activity. Never before in its thirty-four year history, had the Bank been confronted with a hijacking, although it had dealt with many other crises ranging from coups to natural disasters. In many cases, it had become necessary to evacuate people at risk from crisis areas, but there was no possibility of evacuation

in this case. It was too late. The question was how best to deal with the crisis that was unfolding inside the plane.

Pajmans turned over in his mind various possibilities. First, he needed to decide upon the best person to handle the crisis, as he could not afford to devote the time on a round-the-clock, day-to-day basis. But someone would need to do so. Pajmans ran through a half dozen names from the regular administrative staff who could be possible candidates, but found no one suitable. He needed someone who was both experienced and knew the local conditions well. This was especially important since contacts with Afghanistan were virtually non-existent.

As it turned out, in 1980, soon after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the Bank had closed its Kabul office and recalled its chief, James Theodores (or Jim as everybody called him) to Washington. Jim Theodores was looking forward to different, challenging work at headquarters, and hopefully no crises to manage. During his five years in Kabul, he had faced many difficulties, stemming from a disorganized and unstable government. Despite this, Jim had become quite fond of the country and was hoping to go back one day, if stability ever returned.

Pajman's worried eyes perked up. Jim Theodores would be the perfect guy to handle the crisis. He called Jim Theodores on the phone, who came upstairs right away.

Pajmans went straight to the point. "You won't believe it, Jim, but the Bank has been hit with its first hijacking and it is in your old stomping ground."

"Good God, how many staff are on board, do you know them?"

"Luckily, just one this time. It could have been worse, what with all the people we have travelling around at a given time," Pajmans said.

Theodores was told that David Mead was still in Karachi and that my itinerary did not have Peshawar on it originally, but that I added it on at the last moment.

Jim Theodores sighed. A broken record of life in Kabul turned slowly in front of his eyes. He sat down in the large chair in front of Paijmans' polished desk and took a deep breath. Cool and unflappable under pressure, with a face that was as friendly as any grandfather's, Theodores' whole demeanor exuded a sense of experience. It was as if the lines on his brow represented each crisis that he had lived through during the past five years.

Paijmans asked Theodores if he would consider handling the hijacking situation on behalf of the Bank. Savvy in the ways bureaucracies work -- and the ways they don't work -- Jim Theodores agreed to take the assignment under one condition: he wanted to have direct lines of communication to Paijmans, and to Paijmans' boss -- Ernie Stern.

As Senior Vice President for Operations, Ernie Stern was used to making the tough decisions, countless ones, and he was known to be cool-headed under pressure. Ernie had grown up in the most testing of situations: as youths, he and his brother had fled Nazi-occupied Holland and escaped overland by foot and train, narrowly missing ending up in a concentration camp. Maybe it was because of this, or maybe it was just Stern's style, but he immediately granted Jim Theodores his request: the lines of communication would be direct and rapid. Stern decided that the number of decision-makers had to be kept few. There would be no unauthorized initiatives allowed from the Bank's resident offices in Islamabad and New Delhi.

There was good reason for this, as only headquarters through its contacts with the U.N. (New York and Kabul) and the U.S. State Department had the full picture -- to the extent that there was a picture at all. However, the Islamabad office would naturally be the main focal point for monitoring the situation, given its daily contact with the Government of Pakistan.

Jim Theodores moved his gear into his battle station, a room across the hallway from Paijmans; his gear consisted of a shortwave radio, a television, and a couch. The only other item he would need -- a phone with a direct line to Paijmans -- was already there. Jim wanted one

more item: a recent photo of me. When Personnel delivered it, Jim looked at the boyish face, long brown hair and dark eyes. The photo made me look considerably younger than my thirty-four years. But no age was suitable for casting as a hostage, Theodores felt.

Jim Theodores was part Rumanian and part Macedonain. He was well aware of the spate of hijackings that had hit the Middle East in recent years, many of which stemmed from flights that originated in Rome and Athens. Jim had flown out of these two airports many times and had often worried that he might one day be hijacked. So his interest in this assignment was more than vicarious. In a strange way, he felt drawn to it. Even if the resolution of this crisis was well beyond Jim's power, or that of the World Bank, having my face staring up at him from the photo on his desk was all the reminder that Jim needed to keep himself at his post night and day, if need be.

Jim turned to the wad of telexes that had come in during the night. They contained little new information, repeating various aspects of the aircraft's seizure. The gist of the lead hijacker's first radio communication was also included.

A call came in from Gwynn, requesting an update, which Jim provided. As he put down the phone, he felt a twinge of pain. He had never fully gotten over the death of a friend during a shooting incident in the Second World War, when he was part of the U.S. forces in the Pacific. Those memories had lived on for him; he felt that they would never go away.

Jim turned his attention to the crisis that had been dumped in his lap because of his first-hand knowledge of Kabul. He had been told that Gwynn had an upbeat manner, though when she walked into his office, she was understandably restrained. Gwynn seemed like a rock on the outside, but was obviously in pain. Jim tried to reassure her, by going over the information that he had received and outlining the possible scenarios. The most likely one was for a short siege either because the Government of Pakistan would yield to the hijackers' conditions or because the

hijackers proved to be less than resolute. A storming of the plane was unlikely, given the presence of Soviet and Afghan troops, who were known to have supported terrorist acts in the past. If the plane was flown to another destination, the whole thing would have to be looked at afresh. Jim tried to reassure Gwynn by reiterating that it would likely be just a matter of time until the hostages were freed, as long as nothing unexpected happened in the meantime.

Gwynn cast her eyes at the mass of paper on Theodores' desk.

"There's not much other information for me to tell you," he said. "Let's pray and think positively. After all, the hijacking is still in its first twenty-four hours. That's the period when most hijackings end. They tend to be short-lived incidents, if people will only keep their wits about them."

At least that is what Jim told himself, if only for *his* peace of mind, and by proxy, Gwynn's mind. However, he knew that the situation was both unpredictable and highly dangerous. But there was no point in highlighting this to Gwynn.

Tuesday, March, 1981, 9: 00 p.m., Islamabad

Wolfgang Siebeck's office on the third floor of a plain, three-story building in central Islamabad was cluttered with Press clippings and telexes. They were not of the usual kind found in his office. It was late for him to be at the office but this was not a normal situation for him, grappling with this hijacking. As the Bank's Resident Representative, his job was to look after the concerns of all staff. He was in a sense the 'gran patron' out here.

The hijacking felt quite different from the espionage stories that Siebeck liked to read at night to take his mind off development projects. Siebeck and I knew each other quite well. Yet, he would have felt worry even if he had not known the person on board. We had sometimes talked long into the night, about the Bank, the Redskins, Franz Beckenbauer, South Africa and Germany. Topics to shoot around, to take our minds off the tiring meetings of the day.

Siebeck looked through his office window to see if any of his staff were still around -- only the driver and the guard. The telex machine kept on clicking. He sipped his coffee, scanned the Pakistan Dawn and the Pakistan Times, and clipped extracts from Reuters and Agence-France Press. He mulled over the next possible steps. Knowing that India was one of the few countries that maintained diplomatic relations with the Government of Afghanistan, Siebeck wondered whether he should contact the Bank's Resident Representative in New Delhi and ask him to explore initiatives with India's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Or should the Islamabad and New Delhi offices stay in the background and let Washington spell out the next steps?

While Siebeck's training as Resident Representative had not exactly equipped him to handle the day-to-day monitoring of a crisis like this, enough had gone on in Pakistan over the years to make him feel like a battle-hardened veteran. Just a year earlier, the American Embassy in Islamabad had been stormed and set on fire by militants, there had been the 1977 coup that brought General Zia-ul-Haq to power, and there had been those difficult days when Ali Bhutto was tried and eventually hanged in April 1979. That was a chapter in Pakistan's history which Siebeck did not wish to live through again.

Just as Siebeck was about to call the World Bank's office in New Delhi, he got word from Washington that all initiatives needed to be cleared by Paijmans and Theodores. In particular, any approaches to outside authorities had to be cleared in advance. If the Bank was to be able to respond at the shortest possible notice, it had to minimize the amount of diplomatic cross-currents. One person, and only one person, had to be in charge. That man was Jim Theodores, acting for Martijn Paijmans, David Hopper, and ultimately Ernie Stern. The battle stations had been established and were now fully manned.

CHAPTER FIVE

DOUBLE JEOPARDY

The relay of information between the various parties caught up in a terrorist incident is the first and most critical step along the way. Not all of the information known to the crisis managers at a particular moment in time is communicated. The crisis managers might need to keep certain information from the press, for example, until the situation is resolved or has stabilized. The basic issue revolves around a person's nationality. Experience indicates that nationals of some countries have found themselves more at risk than other nationals in some of the most well-known incidents:

- in June 1985, U.S. Navy Diver Robert Stethem was brutally beaten and shot aboard TWA Flight 847, which was skyjacked from Athens to Beirut by Muslim Shiites -- all that Stethem did wrong was to be seen wearing U.S. navy uniform. The U.S. military changed its regulations as a result of this incident -- military personnel are asked to travel in civilian clothes when on leave;

- in October 1985, Leon Klinghoffer was killed while sitting in a wheelchair aboard the Italian cruise ship, Achille Lauro. The ship had been seajacked by five terrorists, four of whom were later arrested after U.S. fighter planes diverted an Egyptair Boeing-737 plane over the Mediterranean and forced it to land in Sicily. In the subsequent trial of the terrorists in Italy, it became clear that Klinghoffer had been targeted only because he was an American; he was also especially vulnerable on account of his infirmity; and

- in June 1976, Dora Bloch, an Israeli grandmother, was killed by Idi Amin's soldiers as she lay in a hospital bed in Entebbe, Uganda. Bloch was one of dozens of Jewish passengers who got taken hostage aboard an Air France plane that was enroute from Tel Aviv to Paris. After the plane was diverted to Entebbe, the hijackers sequestered the Jewish hostages from the non-Jewish ones and sent the former to the airport's terminal building, while they released the latter and allowed them to be flown back to Paris. Bloch was killed in revenge for the killing of several Ugandan soldiers during the raid by the Israeli paratroopers.

Thus, the disclosure of a hostage's nationality can be the single most critical factor between life and death in a terrorist situation.

Day Two: Tuesday, March 3, 1981, 1:00 p.m., Kabul Runway

A low rumbling sound brought me out of my daze. I opened my eyes to see a convoy of trucks and jeeps moving slowly around the aircraft's left wing. The sun's rays shimmered against the green metal fenders of the trucks, making the vehicles look more like an apparition of my imagination than vehicles that could possibly transport us to freedom. A soldier stood on the tarmac immediately below the wing of the plane and he beckoned with the barrel of his rifle that the drivers of the trucks

should move in closer. In front was a jeep with army markings and a small flag pinned to the front -- the design looked like a hammer and sickle. The five army trucks pulled up behind the jeep whereupon dozens of soldiers jumped out and took up positions crouched in front of their vehicles. A van with overhead steps arrived on the scene. My heart beat faster. Why would they be bringing trucks and a van with steps to the rear of the plane if they were not about to try and secure our release? Freedom! My pulse quickened.

Next, a covered jeep with the red and white markings of the Red Cross pulled up next to the trucks and a man in a white coat got out. He carried a black bag in one hand, a clipboard in the other, and began walking briskly to the steps that were now in position at the rear of the plane. Next, three armored personnel carriers pulled up. After another minute or so, an ambulance pulled up next to the Red Cross jeep and the driver jumped out and saluted the white-coated official. A fire truck, old and dilapidated, also arrived and took up position. It didn't look like it could put out a small bush fire, let alone a fiery explosion that could occur if the hijackers' grenades were to ignite our plane's fuel supply. At that point, the crouching soldiers lifted their rifles and aimed them directly at the rear of the aircraft. What the hell was going on? Was the plane about to be stormed? Was that the reason for the strange collection of vehicles that now stood in front of us?

Despite all of this activity and the collection of armor and medical personnel that had arrived on the scene, I concluded that the Afghanistan authorities were unlikely to be mounting a SWAT operation as such counter-terrorist operations were nearly always mounted under cover of darkness and in rapid bursts of movement, not in a slow massing of personnel, as was occurring outside.

Nothing happened for another five minutes; people just stood still on the tarmac and then we heard the thump of heavy footsteps bounding up the staircase. Upon hearing a loud knock on the door, Alamgir shouted something in Urdu, to which he got no reply at first. Then a heavily muffled voice

said something in English that sounded like "Open, open the door!" Alamgir pulled on the long door handle, swung it to the left, and flung the door open.

The fresh air that swept through the door felt wonderful. It was intoxicating, as though it lifted me to another world. It almost felt like the pure oxygen that I inhaled while scuba-diving in the Pacific Ocean. I yearned now to be swimming underwater in a deep sea or running in a wooded park and not to be in this smoke-filled plane. With the memories of scuba-diving flooding my mind, I started to recall this first time that I had experienced the parallel emotions of fright co-existing with the thrill of excitement. I had felt these emotions while treading water deep below the surface surrounded by jagged coral that can cut one's body in an instant. The sheer exhilaration of watching multi-colored fish swim effortlessly by, yet my sensing the dangerous surge of the ocean's swell, had left a visceral impression on me. The panic of fright, the thrill of excitement -- these were complex -- and at times conflicting -- emotions that resided side-by-side in me.

Once while diving, I had become concerned that my tank's oxygen supply might run out before I had sufficient time to ascend the 100 feet or so to the sea's surface. That memory now flooded back to my mind, as I sat in the PIA plane gulping what little fresh air entered the rear door. Again, I was feeling a strange sense of excitement co-existing with a growing sense of fright, as though I was watching scenes from the theater unfold before my eyes. It was fascinating yet frightening; compelling yet confusing. I knew that I was witnessing something unusual, something that I never expected to see first-hand, and the uniqueness of it gripped my system.

The door swung open, revealing a Soviet Army Officer standing there. He passed a piece of paper to Alamgir, who slipped it into his pocket. The officer, speaking in what I assumed was Russian, or some Central Asian language, did all of the talking. Alamgir nodded and pointed to us passengers in the rear of the plane. The thin hijacker walked up. At this point, the Russian officer gesticulated angrily, shouted something that sounded like "Let go, let go!" and moved his rifle from one arm to the other.

Alamgir beckoned him to enter the plane, but pointed to the officer's rifle and shouted something in Urdu. The officer removed the rifle strap from his shoulder and passed the weapon to one of the soldiers who were standing behind him.

The Red Cross representative, wearing a white coat that had many black stains, and with a stethoscope draped around his neck, moved slowly down the aisle. He carried a black valise in his right hand. The Russian army officer, the lead hijacker and the Red Cross person talked earnestly. Soon, the radio clicked and Alamgir's by now familiar voice beamed over the intercom.

"Go to your own seats, have your passports ready and hand them to me and the Red Cross man. Move quickly!"

I went back to seat 2A and waited for an opportunity to pull out my briefcase. I lifted the case out, reached inside for my passport holder, fingered the larger, rough-edged one, which I knew to be my *U.N. laissez-passer*, lifted it out and quickly pushed the smaller, smooth-covered one -- which I knew to be my South African passport -- under the bottom flap in the middle of my briefcase. After returning the case to the overhead bin, I sat down with a sense of relief that my secret was safe, for a while at least.

I then tried to work out what I would say if Alamgir asked me my nationality, as I thought likely he would. People would frequently mistake me for being either British or Australian. I figured that Alamgir's familiarity with English accents would not enable him to tell the difference. Since my *U.N. laissez-passer* did not reveal my nationality, my lie could be sustained as long as the authorities on the ground did not blow my cover. I regretted having disclosed my nationality to the agent at check-in.

Next, I had to work out what to say about my place of residence. Since the Red Cross representative had started working in the rear and middle sections of the aircraft, I had a few minutes to contemplate my options. Based on what Alamgir had said in his broadcasts, I worried about being perceived as an American. So I considered whether I should opt for London or Sydney; but my *laissez-*

passer would give me away, since it contained many Washington-issued visa stamps. Any mention of a location other than Washington was unlikely to deceive Alamgir. Moreover, faced with the choice as to whether it would be better to lie about my nationality or my place of residence, it was no contest; I decided to conceal my nationality. I also felt it necessary to minimize the number of lies since if found out to be untruthful, who could tell what Alamgir might do to me in retaliation?

It was essential that Alamgir not search my briefcase. So, while he was still in the middle section of the plane with the Red Cross Representative not far behind him, I quickly got out my jacket and spread it over the case in the overhead bin. I wished that my case could fly away on a magic carpet - - and I with it -- on a carpet larger than Aladdin's. But reality had no such escape for me.

There was one more problem -- the visa stamp from my visit to Israel once. For a moment I forgot that this stamp had been inserted into my South African passport several years earlier so that my U.N. laissez-passer would not contain it, in the event I had to stop over in an Arab country one day; then I remembered that the visa was in my national passport. It was an additional reason why it made sense for me to have hidden my South African passport.

While I was still turning over these problems over in my mind, I was interrupted by a gruff voice behind me.

"Your passport, give me your passport." It was Alamgir, accompanied by the Red Cross person. They looked impatient. The Red Cross man looked awkward as well. He could not be relishing what he was doing -- collecting documents that were so central to people's survival in this situation. I almost felt sorry for him. I, sorry for him!

I reached down into the seat pocket in front of me and hauled out my U. N. laissez-passer. Alamgir looked at it and said: "Your national passport, where is it?".

"Sorry, I don't have it with me. I travel with my U.N. passport -- that is the one that contains my Pakistan visa inside. Look here it is, on the last page you can see my visa for entry into Pakistan this time and on the page before it, you can see last year's visa."

I was trying to convince him that I was not the occasional visitor, one of those CIA agents he referred to.

Alamgir kept on turning the pages. He stopped at the page in the middle that had my 1979 visa in it.

"I see you were in the country in the month when Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was hanged, April 1979. You know what I am talking about, *Mr. Jeffrey*. I thought you were a new visitor, but I see you come to our country often. What is your nationality, *Mr. Jeffrey*?"

Apparently, my tactic had backfired. I felt that his form of addressing me -- by my first name, with a sarcastic emphasis on "*Mr.*" -- was just to make a point: you are not welcome in our country and you don't fit in.

I cleared my throat which was dry from thirst and more so from fright.

"You asked about my nationality -- it's British," I answered, hoping that any flinch of my eyes would not give my secret away.

"But where do you live, *Mr. Jeffrey*, where is your home?" Alamgir said mockingly again. His English, while not perfect, was much more fluid now; he had the ability to alter his delivery depending with whom he was talking.

"Your passport has many visa stamps in it. Visas from Washington embassies. You know what I'm talking about, don't you? If you are British, why do you say you live in Washington? You lie! Do you really work for the United Nations?" he asked in disbelief.

"Yes I do," this being true, up to a point, as the World Bank is a specialized agency of the U.N system.

"I do live in Washington. Many British people live in Washington. I used to live in London once, but I moved to Washington about ten years ago."

Searching desperately for a way to convince Alamgir, I thought of a device: reaching towards the book I had under my seat, I pulled out an envelope that had become my bookmark.

"Look at this letter that I received just before I left home. Look at the postmark, look at the address on it -- you see, it's my address in Washington."

I pointed at the address with a trembling index finger. "I'm telling you the truth. Please believe me. Why would I lie to you?"

For some reason not entirely clear to me at the time, Alamgir backed away momentarily without answering. It was a stroke of good fortune that my "bookmark" had proven to be so vital, verifying my address. Reading the book had proven to be a fruitless endeavor as I had little concentration, but the bookmark had served a function far more valuable than the mere demarcation of pages read, or pages turned but unread in this case.

Alamgir returned, passed me by, and started to question the woman in front of me -- the elderly lady with a face that spoke years of wisdom. Alamgir then questioned her son.

I started to panic that Alamgir might have sensed that I was Jewish and would return to question me some more. Perhaps it was my dark brown eyes and my general appearance that gave me away. Curiously enough, other than the fact that the color of our skins were different and that I had no moustache, Alamgir and I did not look all that different from each other. Semitic backgrounds share something in common with South Asian backgrounds, especially the Jews and the *Parsees*, descendants of the Zoroastrians of ancient Persia. The more I looked at Alamgir's face, the more I thought that he bore a resemblance to a particular *Parsee* friend of mine, a thought which disturbed me. And what disturbed me even more is that I resembled Alamgir to some extent.

My Jewish dilemma: the image of my late great-grandfather flashed in front of my eyes. I knew that my name *Balkind* was derived from my great-grandfather, who was the son of a woman named *Bella*. This first name gave rise to my surname, in that *Bella* lived in Riga, Latvia, and her son - - my great-grandfather -- became known as the "*kind*" or "*kinder*" (from the Yiddish word meaning "child") of *Bella*, which later was converted into the name *Balkind*. And so it came to pass that my great-grandfather had to flee Latvia more than a hundred years ago to rid himself of the Russians who were persecuting the Jews at the time, not quite like the Nazis would do sixty years later, but enough for him and thousands of other Ashkenazy Jews, to flee Latvia all of the same. Many of those Jews ended up settling in South Africa in search of peace, ironically; and in search of adventure, which they did find. And here I was protecting my Jewish secret as though my very life depended on it. And so it did, on this plane in Kabul of all places.

Grandpa Leopold! When he was my age, he could not have imagined sitting in a hijacked plane in Afghanistan. He knew little about airplanes or about South Asia, although his ship once docked in Bombay. The word "hijack" had not yet made its way into the English dictionary and the Wright brothers had only recently made their historic flight. Times were simpler in those days, much simpler, and the phenomenon of terrorists seizing aircraft had yet to unleash itself on the world.

The Red Cross person, sensing, I believe, my duplicity, suggested to Alamgir that they move on as there were still a few more passports to be collected. Alamgir nodded, grabbed my *laissez-passer* and tossed it into a large bag in his hand. The bag looked laden with many passports. He pointed to the Red Cross list and told the man to add my name to the list. I glanced down at the list which was organized by seat numbers. It read: "Seat 2A , Jeffrey Balkind, U .K."

I read on: "Seat 2B, Engineer Nadir."

So that's who my fellow passenger was -- Engineer Nadir, the engineer from the cockpit who had been ejected from his seat because Alamgir needed the space to carry out his radio communications.

Next, Alamgir and his reluctant helper started to walk back down the aisle again. They stopped at my row for the second time and looked at me. Alamgir moved on. I looked into the eyes of the Red Cross man and said quietly, "please do something for us, all of us on this plane!"

He could not respond as Alamgir was standing five feet away, his back towards us. I worried that I had been less than prudent to convey a message to the Red Cross. Frequently, it seemed as if Alamgir had eyes in the back of his head. Could he have read my thoughts? I figured that this was unlikely as my ESP was reserved for communicating with Gwynn, and no one else. Was Gwynn able to read my thoughts at that moment? Was she privy to my dilemma and the deception that I had just engaged in order to not expose my double jeopardy? I wondered and wondered

I sank into my seat and wiped the sweat from my brow. I was drenched and shaking. Danger had been averted for the meantime. My South African passport was safe, nestled in the bottom of my briefcase. I prayed that it stay there, out of sight, out of mind.

After another ten minutes, Alamgir returned with the bag full of passports and took it into the cockpit for his special form of safekeeping -- further scrutiny. Alamgir was proving to be systematic -- he was not about to let the Red Cross keep the passports; a list of names and nationalities was sufficient for them.

Alamgir passed through the cockpit door. I breathed a short-lived sigh of relief as I began to torture myself asking if I had done the right thing to lie about my nationality. Alamgir's remarks about Zionism and racism had scared me. To be sure, there were risks to my having lied, and if found out, the consequences would be disastrous. Alamgir might think that I was a double agent if he knew that

I was carrying double passports. But what was the alternative? Disclosing my South African nationality - never!

About 15 minutes later, Alamgir came back towards me and muttered:

"You're from United Nations, huh! Mr. Waldheim, he's a good man. He pleaded for Zulfikar Bhutto's life, but Zia didn't listen. If you work for the United Nations, then maybe you are not a CIA man. Yesterday, in the airport, I thought you were a CIA man. The CIA brings problems to our country -- many problems. They help Zia all the time. They helped Zia to kill Zulfikar Bhutto and they tried to kill me last year when I was at Karachi University. I found out just in time. I spoiled their plan."

Alamgir had a smile of satisfaction written all over his face.

"You know, the CIA cannot win against our people. We are too many people, you kill one of us, and there are more to follow in the struggle. We will be victorious."

He stumbled over the pronunciation, but he seemed to know the meaning of the word as he said again, "We will win!" And off he went.

"You know why he believes that," Nadir interjected. "Gir means conqueror."

I asked Nadir what Alamgir and the elderly lady had been talking about. Apparently, she had pleaded with Alamgir to let everybody off the plane. She had mentioned that she was unwell and that she needed to see a doctor.

"So what did Alamgir reply?" I asked.

"Doctors are impossible, getting off is impossible, she has to remain here, like everyone else."

I heard a rumble and looked outside. A food truck pulled up to the door followed by a second truck. Ariana In-flight Catering Services, the sign read. Food, and more importantly beverages, at last. The thirst was the worst of it, not the pangs of hunger. Rabbi Cohen was right when he told us on Yom Kippur that it is the thirst, not the hunger, that will make one repent. Oh, how I missed Rabbi

Cohen. If he were here, he might help us -- all of us. Rabbi Cohen never cared about which religion a distressed person belonged to. "We are all God's children," he would say.

Well God, one-hundred and forty eight of your children are waiting for your divine intervention!

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It took the Ariana ground staff nearly an hour to distribute the chicken curry. I wolfed it down in three minutes and swallowed my tea so rapidly that it burned my tongue. Curry had never tasted so good. Feeling soothed by the warm meal, I folded my arms for extra warmth and fell into a deep sleep for the first time in nearly thirty-six hours. It was 6:30 p.m.

Sleep was short-lived. I woke up at 8:30 p.m. feeling totally disoriented. The lights were dim in the plane, and they were even dimmer outside. A hose spiralled upwards from a mobile generator to the underside of the plane's left wing. I heard a low grinding sound and saw white smoke as the generator kicked into action. Warm air started to come through the vents above our heads. Heat! We were at last getting some heat. So the Red Cross visit had achieved something besides aiding in the surrender of our passports. Basic humanitarian conditions aboard the plane were beginning to improve - food, heat, and if we were lucky, blankets might even arrive. The things that I had previously taken for granted on a flight were prized additions to our existence.

The improved physical conditions allowed me to worry less about our discomfort and more about how to get out of the plane. I needed to hatch an escape plan, but with whom? What items would I need, like rope, and when would be the best time to try launch an escape? I mulled over these questions for several hours without being able to come up with any plausible ideas.

Clearly, the odds of pulling off an escape were not in my favor. We were at a vast disadvantage as the hijackers had formidable weapons. Combating pistols is one thing; grenades are another. Even if I had a pistol, I doubted whether I had the will to pull the trigger. The thought of killing someone, even in self-defense, did not sit easily with me.

Engineer Nadir leaned over and whispered that the hijackers had dynamite with them, so we all must be careful. Apparently, Alamgir had mentioned the dynamite in his first Urdu speech, which I had not picked up. The prospect of dynamite being on board was both frightening and intriguing. This is not material that can easily be hidden without the crew knowing where it was. With the hijackers on patrol, the bag or box of dynamite could be taken away by a crew member or a passenger. But without the detonator, it was useless to anyone other than Alamgir and one would assume that he had the detonator with him somewhere, perhaps in his baggy shalwar kameez.

I wondered how Alamgir and his accomplices had been able to smuggle so many weapons and dynamite through the check-in and security searches, so I asked Engineer Nadir about this. He shrugged. There was no doubt that the security measures at Karachi airport left much to be desired. The airport had experienced several security lapses in the past, most recently when a hijacker brought a grenade on board a DC-10. Our purser Javed Bhatti tackled the hijacker, who was killed by his own grenade in that incident.

I asked Nadir if there ever was an official investigation into how the hijacker had smuggled his grenade on board in that incident, to which he replied that there was an investigation done, but the findings were never made public. This situation was quite different in the United States, I told Nadir, since reports of investigations done by the National Transport and Aeronautics Safety Board were invariably released to the public.

Engineer Nadir did not realize that I was becoming angry. If this was the state of affairs at Karachi Airport, why were no travel advisory warnings ever issued to the passengers? In contrast,

there had been many warnings about security conditions in such airports as Rome, Athens, and Cairo. Rome in particular had been hit with several well-known terrorist incidents and the United States Government had issued a list of airports to avoid if possible.

I pursued my questioning, feeling somewhat incensed.

"How come the bags in which the weapons might have been stashed were able to evade the metal detectors at Karachi airport? And how did Alamgir and the other two evade the personal frisking by the guards?"

Naturally, Engineer Nadir declined to answer these questions. It wasn't his responsibility.

Looking back on the airport scene, it became clear just how uneven the security checks had been. The frisking was haphazard -- some people got really worked over, while others were touched lightly; then there was the incident with the man on the stretcher; and there had been a moment when the metal detectors were not working at all. Nor were any questions asked as to who had packed one's bags. I was later told that, unlike some of the large international airlines, PIA did not try to match profiles of passengers against standard hijacker profiles, which requires sophisticated computerization.

I asked Nadir about the likelihood of a SWAT rescue operation being mounted in Kabul.

"Impossible, not in Afghanistan. Pakistan does not maintain diplomatic relations with Afghanistan. The Soviet Union controls matters, and it has no interest in seeing this end. They don't like Zia either."

The plane started to feel cold again. There was no rumbling sound outside. Engineer Nadir said that the generators must have stopped working again. He said that either it had broken down or perhaps the authorities had shut it down on purpose in order to force the hijackers to surrender. If that was the tactic, it was not succeeding. Alamgir did not seem concerned at all about the cold. He looked robust and moved around the plane constantly, while we had to sit like cold, cramped dogs. The discomfort built on the pain from cramps. The temperature seemed to have dropped to no more than 50

degrees inside the plane. It was cold, dark, and terrifying inside this metal hull, a structure that only the day before I had viewed as an exciting winged bird of flight.

The aisle appeared to disappear into a black hole in the rear; the hijackers had flung the rear door open and what I was seeing was a glimpse, however small, of the pitch black night. I wished I was there, outside.

I thought about trying to get access to my sleeping pills in my briefcase above my head, but there were two problems: Alamgir might see me opening my bag, confiscate it, and find my South African passport. Also, should a SWAT team come bursting through the front door, I needed to be able to get up instantly so as to avoid any crossfire and not be weighed down by the drowsiness brought on by pills. I wondered why the RED CROSS couldn't have seen to it that we were supplied with proper-functioning generators and blankets so that we wouldn't have to be put through an endurance test like this. Combating the psychological stress was bad enough; it didn't have to be aggravated by the growing physical hardship. I dug my heels into the cold floor below and twitched my toes for increased blood circulation.

The intercom crackled. Alamgir's rasping voice could be heard clearly:

"One of the passengers on board this plane is not carrying his true documentation. He is a traitor. We shall deal with him later!"

The intercom was clicked off as quickly as it had come on. My mind started to race with a myriad of questions. Was Alamgir referring to me? Had I made a tragic mistake in saying that I was British? Had he realized or had he been told that I was indeed a South African, and did he therefore think that my U.N passport was a fake? Had Alamgir gotten hold of some other information, say from the PIA check-in counter? Who could be trusted and who should one be wary of -- the Pakistani hostages, the other foreigners, the crew? These were chilling thoughts, imagining that Alamgir might have been

talking about me when he mentioned " not carrying his true documentation." Or was Alamgir referring instead to the frightened Pakistani diplomat, Tariq Rahim?

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Day Two: Tuesday, March 3, 1981, 11:00 p.m., Washington

Jim Theodores placed a call to Gwynn Davies.

"Gwynn, I have received the full passenger list and Jeffrey's name is on it, but one thing is baffling me: the article from the *Pakistan Times*, the country's largest newspaper and a reliable one, refers to five foreigners, in which three - Craig Clymore, Lawrence Mangum and Fred Hubbell -- are American. There's a Swede on board, Eriksson, and the fifth Westerner is listed as 'nationality unknown.' Is that unknown person your husband perhaps? What do you think Jeff has told the hijackers?"

Gwynn paused. "Jeff would never have divulged that he's South African, not in this situation at least. My guess is that he handed in his *laissez-passer* if he was able to handle the switch, without showing the South African passport. Jeffrey was always sensitive about his nationality when he travelled abroad, but at home he was so open about it."

She proceeded to recount a story about how once we were at the D.C. Department of Motor Vehicles and I was late in getting my license renewed. I needed tolerance from the clerks, yet I volunteered the information that I was from (the hated country) South Africa, where I had obtained my first driver's license. I could have just avoided the question as I had an international driver's license. Miracle of miracles, I got my license renewed without penalty.

Gwynn and I were different. She could have been schooled by the Secret Service; no information would be volunteered on her part. I was not the same, until this hijacking incident gave me a crash course in the need for being on one's guard all of the time.

Jim Theodores continued his line of enquiry. "So what nationality do you think Jeffrey has claimed on the plane?"

Gwynn stopped to think. "Hmm, ... British, Australian, New Zealand, Canadian -- take your pick. His grandfather had lived in all of these countries for a short spell. One thing I know, is that he would not have said that he's American. Jeff believes that the Americans are at special risk in these incidents."

Jim was surprised "Real nomadic family it seems, how did you meet him, how did the two of you ever slow down enough to meet?"

"At work one day. We got engaged at *Brown's Hotel in London*. I was flying to Indonesia; Jeff was returning from India. We were like two ships crossing in the night. Seems like yesterday, but it seems so far away ..." Gwynn's voice drifted off.

Theodores promised to call her if he found out anything more. Meanwhile, he had to go to Paijmans' office to get approval for a blackout of any mention of Jeffrey's real nationality, should the newspapers call, having got wind that a World Bank person was on board the hijacked PIA plane. Paijmans concurred with Jim Theodores, who then put his carefully formulated Plan "A" into action -- a complete stonewall on all communications with the press. "*No comment*" would be the standard response.

The phone rang. He let his secretary get it, as he needed to finish writing telex for sending to Kabul. On the phone was his counterpart in security coordination at the British Embassy in Washington.

"Looks like your man has said he is British, yet we can't find his name in our records."

"How do you know this?" Theodores asked.

"We have just gotten word from our embassy in Kabul, which keeps in close touch with the U. N. office there. It turns out that the Deputy Resident Representative of the UNDP is a *Brit*. Chris Runnell is his name. Talks to our chaps in the embassy regularly. Runnell said that Balkind listed himself as British. However, we can't find his name in our records anywhere. What is his nationality?"

"South African, but that is for your ears only." Theodores heard a whistle of surprise on the other end of the line.

"I see what you are worried about. Best of luck, old boy."

Theodores thanked the caller and hung up.

No sooner had he put the phone down, it rang again. It was Sjoerd Boersma, Chief, Emergency Coordination Unit, U.N. Headquarters, New York. Boersma informed Theodores that the U.N. Representative, Bonev, a Bulgarian, had sent a telex confirming that Balkind's name was on the passenger list that he had received from the Red cross. It was the Red Cross that had listed Balkind as "nationality unknown".

Boersma enquired about Balkind's nationality, which Theodores told him could not be disclosed. Boersma was perplexed but did not push the issue.

Theodores was skeptical as to how much frank information he would be able to get from Bonev, being Bulgarian in a setting where the Soviets held sway. Dealing with Runnell would be different, however, and he decided to keep that avenue of communication as open as possible.

Jim was exhausted. He needed to get some rest not just on the office couch, but in his bed at home. His wife, Rose, would be waiting up for him with a hot dinner -- a midnight dinner again. He went downstairs to get his car out of the cavernous garage. There was no one around, just a guard who smiled at him as he exited. He was beginning to know the security detail by face. Tonight's man looked South Asian, perhaps even from Pakistan or Afghanistan. He wondered if the guard knew who

he was -- our man from Kabul. It reminded him of an old James Mason movie. But he didn't feel like James Mason. Mason usually won; he was not at all sure that this hijacking situation would be resolved satisfactorily.

Jim became gloomy. It was just a little more than two years before -- on February 14, 1979, Valentine's Day -- that his good friend, U.S. Ambassador Spike Dubs, was shot dead by a Soviet-Afghan strike force, while Jim had to watch helplessly as he stood in the room where Dubs was being held captive. It was incidents such as this that gave Theodore's his energy to stay at his post day and night, in case there was anything that he could do to help matters as regards the hijacking.

Terrorism, in whatever form, had to be combated and the careful handling of the crisis was all that counted for the moment. He worried most of all about havoc that could result from a clumsy SWAT operation and decided that he would put into play some of the contacts he still kept in Kabul in order to get the real scoop on the situation.

Theodore swung his Chevy station-wagon past the White House, down Virginia Avenue and onto the George Washington Parkway. He eased the gear stick into overdrive and reclined his head. The cool night air felt so good and the stars shone so brightly. Perhaps he could bottle up some of the fresh air and send it to PK326, along with an escape chute, he thought.

He turned onto Route 123 in Mclean, Virginia. As he passed the sign posts for the CIA headquarters in Langley, Theodore could not help but reflect that the hijacking was beginning to resemble a spy story. If only it was not so darn real. Perhaps he should go back to working on simpler stuff, like managing the Bank's office in Kabul. Too bad it had been closed down.

The nearby entrance to the CIA was the very same place where some twelve years later - - in 1993 -- a young Pakistani named Kansi from a prominent family in Quetta, Baluchistan would try to shoot the CIA Director. Kansi killed two CIA employees instead. No one knew if drugs or some other motive was involved. The FBI launched an intensive manhunt for Kansi, all the way to Baluchistan, but

to no avail. So two incidents years apart and eight thousand miles away did have some common thread, or so it seemed.

Word Count: 6533

CHAPTER SIX **LAST WISHES**

In 1981, Afghanistan was a foreboding place. Kabul was controlled by Soviet soldiers. Some were Russian, some Ukrainian, but most came from the Central Asian republics as they were more familiar with the Afghan tribal people and the rugged terrain. Afghan troops played a minor role. With the collapse of the Soviet Union some eleven years later, some of the de-classified material of the defunct KGB revealed that the Soviet and Afghan authorities did not really try to resolve the hijacking. On the contrary, Pakistan's allegations that the Soviet Union and Afghanistan actually hindered the negotiations and prevented a swift resolution of the crisis appear valid. However, the Soviet and Afghan authorities did press for the hijackers to release the women and children. And this would not have happened were it not for a weird event occurring on the plane.

Day Three: Wednesday, March 4, 1981, 6:00 a.m., Kabul Runway

Daybreak came. Outside my window, a couple of Aeroflot planes were parked near the terminal building. I had not seen many passengers alight from the planes. Few tourists visited Afghanistan at the time due to the war and there were there no planes from international airlines, except for the half dozen Ariana planes and one from Syrian Air. What was even more unusual is that I saw Soviet military aircraft take off with loaded bombing bays. Later in the morning, the jets would return with their bays empty. Hundreds of Mujahaddin guerrillas may have been killed that day, and here I was witnessing the movement of Soviet aircraft up and down the runway. Never did I expect to have a bird's eye-view of the Soviet military in action. It was uncanny.

Over the previous two years, I had followed with interest the progress on the Afghanistan war, if only because it affected the number of refugees that would be accommodated for in-service training in the project that I was putting together: a World Bank-financed industrial estate in the NWFP region. Thus, I kept abreast of the latest refugee figures; they ran into the hundreds of thousands, some people said millions. And it was the Soviet Union's intrusion that had led to the flood of refugees across the Pakistan border, perhaps some of the same troops who were camped outside our plane. It all added to the disorientation I felt, and also to the strange sense of excitement at witnessing history in the making.

The Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in December 1979, which should not have come as much as a surprise as there had been many warning signs. Long ties existed between the Central Asian

republics of the Soviet Union and some of the Afghan tribal people, and the Kremlin's preoccupation with Afghanistan was evident. At first, the Soviets tried to subjugate the population by installing the "puppet regime" of Babrak Karmal. By 1981, the Soviet military, with weak support from the Afghan soldiers, found itself bogged down in the mountainous terrain. The Mujahaddin guerrillas were beginning to turn the tide. On several occasions in Peshawar and Islamabad, I had met Western journalists who liked to compare the Afghanistan war to the U.S. debacle in Vietnam, and they predicted a similar disastrous result for the Soviet Union if it did not withdraw soon. Thus, my witnessing of Soviet military aircraft on bombing raids gave me a sense that I was observing history repeating itself in a different setting: the cold mountains of Afghanistan replaced the steamy, jungle swamps of Vietnam. However, already it was beginning to appear that the result would be the same: a superpower mired in an unsolvable conflict.

I put away my book, David Halberstam's *The Best and the Brightest*, about the Vietnam war, much of which I wasn't absorbing in any case. I was trying in particular to focus on the chapters that covered Robert McNamara, President Kennedy's Secretary of Defense, who many considered to be the brightest of the brightest. Mr. McNamara was also my ultimate boss at the time, having become president of the World Bank after leaving his position in the U.S. Administration.

I needed to stretch my legs badly but since this was not allowed, I feigned the need to use the toilet. My right hand shot up. Alamgir responded and escorted me down to the rear toilet as the front toilet was clogged and foul. The rear toilet was in use. Five more minutes passed. The sound of a toilet being flushed could be heard and the door was opened -- it was Craig Clymore, crazy Craig. He still looked as though he was in space. Before I could enter the bathroom, Alamgir bent over and shouted at Tariq Rahim, the man he had accosted before.

"I told you, be quiet!"

Alamgir slapped Tariq Rahim hard on his left cheek. Rahim reeled and looked at me with a plea of anguish. I stopped in my tracks and instinctively tried to move towards Rahim. Alamgir scowled at me. I was courting danger by responding to Rahim, it seemed, so I stood still.

After a minute, Alamgir stopped slapping Rahim around and walked over to the bathroom door, which somebody had closed despite the hijackers' instructions. Alamgir turned the knob and pushed the door open, only to see an embarrassed female hostage sitting on the commode. She had presumably slipped into the bathroom while Alamgir's attention was on Rahim.

"You must leave the door open, women also -- leave the door open! Give me your cosmetic bag, now!"

Alamgir did not even blush on confronting the half-dressed female. So whatever male-female decorum may have existed in a normal situation was subordinated to the security concerns of the hijackers. It was as though we were at war and Alamgir was not about to relax any of his defences. How was he to know that this female passenger might not be an air marshal in disguise, who might be carrying a weapon in her cosmetic case? He probably knew that El Al Airlines deployed female security agents in disguise on their planes, and hijackers had been known to use similar ploys when stashing their weapons away. These innovative techniques originated in part from the Middle East, which served as the training ground for the Baader-Meinhof Gang and the Japanese Red Army, and in part from South and Central America where there was a long history of hijackings starting with the first ever recorded hijacking in the world in Peru in May 1930.

In August 1969, Leila Khaled, a prominent member of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the PFLP, hijacked a TWA plane from Rome's Fiumicino airport, as well as an EL AL plane from Amsterdam's Schipol airport a year later. Khaled, schooled by the leader of the PFLP George Habash, would hide her pistol and grenade inside her slacks or in her blouse. At times, she carried the weapons hidden inside her cosmetic case. Using her good looks to full advantage, she charmed the Italian

and Dutch security guards respectively into not frisking her properly in these two instances. Khaled was captured on the El Al plane as it left Amsterdam, but not before her Nicaraguan male accomplice, Patrick Arguello, was shot dead in mid-flight by the Israeli air marshals on board.

So Alamgir was on the look-out for cosmetic cases, amongst other things, and it was consistent with his tactic of putting all of the women in the aisles and the men in the window seats where he could watch them more closely. He was proving to be thorough and controlled about every action he took, save for the bout of anger towards Tariq Rahim moments earlier.

Alamgir returned to terrorizing Rahim again, hovering over him menacingly. Rahim turned his head toward me for the second time, which only led Alamgir to curse more loudly. He shook his hand at me and told me to move away. I walked quickly to the front.

Danger was a relative concept. Here I was, worrying about whether I would ever get out of this plane alive, and there was this other passenger, Tariq Rahim, who it seemed had already been targeted for harsh treatment. Just what he had done to merit this, I did not know. I had been told that he was a diplomat and that his father had been a high-ranking military officer. But that in itself was not enough to warrant being made a special target. There had to be something else. Who was he?

I recalled the wedding ring incident. If I were Tariq Rahim, I too would have slipped my wedding ring into the seat pocket. But if he was so concerned to protect his identity, why had he divulged his name when Alamgir had collected the passports? Or was it that he didn't do so initially, but Alamgir recognized him? Was Alamgir so high up in the Al Zulfikar Organization that he would have known Tariq Rahim personally, or was it someone else who recognized Tariq Rahim? I tried to ask Engineer Nadir these questions, but the third hijacker saw me whispering and cut me short.

"No talking, no talk!" he shouted.

A little while later, as we were finishing the breakfast that the Ariana ground staff had brought aboard, a key incident occurred that changed the balance -- and composition -- of hostages in the plane.

A small boy, perhaps no more than eight years old, walked up to the grandmother and her adult son on my right. The boy then ran ahead and caught up with Alamgir who was walking towards the front galley. The boy stopped, pulled on the rear of Alamgir's *shalwar kameez*, and yanked it. With lightning speed, Alamgir whisked out his pistol from under his long garment, spun around, and was just about to shoot his "assailant" when he saw who was standing in front of him.

The boy blurted out something, which sounded like: "Uncle, please, you said we go home .. I want to go home, I want my mama, I want my mama!"

The petrified father ran into the front cabin, scooped his son into his arms and shouted: "No, no, don't shoot, he's only a child. He didn't know not to pull on your *shalwar kameez*. I told him to be still, but he's only a boy. He's my eldest son. You have to let the children go!"

Alamgir looked ashamed. He turned around and went into the cockpit.

Hearing the reference to the man's first-born brought to mind images of the final plague that forced the Pharaoh to let the Jews out of Egypt. As a Jew, caught in this predominantly Muslim, life-threatening setting day after day, I felt especially disoriented. It was as if I were an outsider looking through a glass window at people inside a prison cell; but not quite, as I was at the same time incarcerated inside the cell.

I was struck by the fluency of the small boy's English and surmised that he was likely attending an English school in Karachi, or one abroad. He started to cry and his father tried to comfort him. Alamgir came out again, looking visibly shaken. He had come so close to shooting an innocent child. He put his hand on the boy's head and stroked his hair. I was relieved to see Alamgir's display of feelings - at least to children. Perhaps he was not the animal that one of the hostages had called him under his breath earlier in the day. I could not say the same for the other two hijackers.

The father and boy returned to their seats and Alamgir to his in the cockpit. He left the door slightly ajar again. Up to this point, I had never seen him close the door entirely, I assumed because he

wanted to keep the pilot and co-pilot, as well as the passengers, under observation -- to the extent that he could. It would have been difficult, if not impossible, for the three hijackers to control the aircraft for the entire time if they were to leave the cockpit door closed, with one of them occupied inside it. I would later learn that having only two hijackers to guard an entire plane for an extended period has proven to be unfeasible -- in all of the protracted incidents, there have been three or more hijackers.

I could hear Alamgir speaking: "Hello, Kabul, hello Kabul... this is PK326."

I could not hear the response.

Alamgir: "Send three buses to pick up all women and children immediately. I make this gesture of goodwill. They are all released now."

Goodwill? Not exactly! Clearly, Alamgir could not control the plane if children kept on getting in his way. The release appeared to represent a step of sheer pragmatism, not humanitarianism, on his part. Unwittingly, the Shah kid had already demonstrated the likelihood of some accident occurring if the children were to remain on the plane.

Within minutes, two Ariana buses pulled up to the front of the plane. The women and children were told to get their belongings together and to leave the aircraft through the front door. The opening of that door provided me with the first whiff of fresh air that I had breathed ever since the Soviet officer had entered the plane while I was in the rear. The front door had remained tightly shut for three days because this way the hijackers only had to worry about guarding one door, including when the food was brought in and out.

A mother cried in relief on walking through the front door. I shared her happiness with tears of my own. I glanced at Engineer Nadir. He too had tears rolling down his cheeks and his expression conveyed the feeling of joy, probably mingled with envy of the departing hostages.

Engineer Nadir said: "Now that most of the women passengers have been released -- eighteen of them to be exact and nine children -- this leaves 121 persons, including our ten crew members, still

on board. That is a lot of hostages for Alamgir to deal with. Under our customs, now that the women passengers have been released, or most of them anyway, the air hostesses are also likely to be allowed to leave soon."

My heart skipped a beat. All of this time, I had been concerned that I had not left a will at home and it was disturbing me, with my family spread in different continents. The health of my parents, who were in their sixties, was worrying me and I wanted to rectify matters by providing for them. Not that my parents would be concerned with that aspect should I be so unfortunate as to not survive this incident. I did not want to lose a chance of smuggling a makeshift will off the plane. So I looked for a piece of paper but there was none to be found. I was not going to risk opening my briefcase again, especially with Alamgir standing nearby. So I hauled out an unused napkin from my seat pocket and quickly wrote a few instructions on it. They were necessarily very brief. After I had finished scribbling in the dozen or so seconds that I had at my disposal, I reached out and touched the tall flight attendant on her elbow as she walked by. I quickly pressed the napkin into the palm of her hand.

"Miss Sharif, please take this note and mail it in Islamabad, to a Mr. Siebeck. He'll know what to do with it."

Farzana Sharif smiled briefly and leaned closer. She whispered:

"Acha ... but I don't know what will happen to us next."

Her hands trembled as she tucked the note away. Nearby, Alamgir stood with his back to us.

With one-fifth of the hostages gone, there was more room inside the plane. However, the hijackers continued to restrict all movement out of our seats and still to forbid us from laying down, even to the point that we were not allowed to remove the armrests from the seats. Technically, there were enough empty seats to accommodate about a quarter of the passengers in a horizontal position, and the hijackers' intransigence seemed puzzling. Only later, did one of the crew tell me that Alamgir was afraid that one of the passengers (or a crew member) could pick up a disabled armrest from the floor and use

the sharp metal points as a club or spear. The crew member also said that Alamgir's strategy was to make people as tired as possible as he felt he was more likely to be attacked by a rested passenger than a worn-out one. So Alamgir left nothing to chance, as though he was trained by Leila Khaled herself. The world of hijackers was a small club, it seemed.

A few ailing passengers were allowed to recline, but not before the Red Cross Representative in Kabul had been asked to come on board and attest to their weak condition. After the passport surrender sequence, the representative made two more visits to the plane, once to treat a man who went into convulsions from epilepsy, and the other occasion to check out a man with a weak heart condition, according to Engineer Nadir. Both men were allowed to leave in wheelchairs that were brought out onto the apron for them. So Alamgir was not entirely lacking in concern.

The fact that most of the women were released was simply on account of the situation vis-a-vis the children, who could not be released by themselves. Once Alamgir decided to release the mothers, one of them being Mrs. Shah with her four kids, including the boy who had accosted Alamgir in the aisle, the other Pakistani women (married or not) had to be freed as well. At least, that was the condition that the Kabul negotiators set for continued delivery of food and medicine to the plane.

The only women to remain on board were the two flight attendants, the portly grandmother next to me, Charlotte Hubbell, and another American woman, Deborah Leighton Weisner. I later learned that the two American women were kept inside the plane against their will, contrary to what Alamgir mentioned on the intercom when he announced his "goodwill measure" (he had said that all women were being released, except two foreigners, one who wished to stay with her husband and the other with her fiance). The crew later told me that Alamgir kept the American women in the plane because he thought that their lives represented higher bargaining chips to him than those of the Pakistani women. This confirmed to me that I had done the right thing when I lied about my nationality (the British "nationality" was holding up well for now), since Alamgir was making distinctions between certain nationalities. He

could well have decided to eliminate a South African before an American or European. Even the two American women were finding themselves at greater risk.

I would later find out that Debbie Weisner's fiance was a Pakistani-born deputy-sheriff from Auburn, Maine. He was on his way to visit his parents in Peshawar. Needless to say, the deputy-sheriff's training was not helping to resolve our situation in any way. To me, he looked no different from any other hostage.

Alamgir offered to free the elderly woman next to me, and he thought that she was leaving, only to find her still sitting in her seat after the door had closed. The woman refused to go because Alamgir would not free her son. That is real bravery, which is what made her so unforgettable for me.

From the hijackers' perspective, the extra space afforded by the release of the women and children gave them a clear view of all of the remaining hostages who were no longer hidden behind a mass of crowded passengers. This enabled Alamgir and the other two to monitor us more intensely -- our every hand movement, our whispers, and our eye signals. So communication became more difficult all around. The hijackers never slept more than one at a time; there were always two on patrol, up and down the aisle.

The first bus, now full with the women and children, pulled away and left the second bus standing there. The driver of that bus then moved his vehicle over to the rear steps where a man was walking down the steps. To my astonishment, it was the same person who had been carried onto the plane in a stretcher at Karachi airport. I smelled a rat, and a rat it was.

Turning to Engineer Nadir, I asked in an outraged tone: "How come someone who was too ill to walk onto the plane when we departed, is now well enough to walk off the plane after he has been sitting as a virtual prisoner without sleep and food for three days? And why was he the only man to be released?"

Engineer Nadir shifted awkwardly in his seat. He did not want to confirm my suspicion -- that under the blankets of the so-called sick man's stretcher had lain all of the hijackers' weapons. If that was the case, it constituted a reprehensible example of collusion on the part of staff at Karachi airport. This was a devastating assertion, but one which was corroborated to me much later by a high source, in fact the highest source possible in this particular ordeal. However, at this stage, while my "man-on-the-stretcher theory" remained sheer speculation, it seemed plausible. And it made Engineer Nadir sufficiently uncomfortable that he did not respond for a while.

I was hoping that the flight attendants would be allowed to leave. And indeed this appeared to be the case. Farzana Sharif and Naila Raza lifted their bags, but as they were about to move to the door, Alamgir approached them. He waved his pistol.

"You not leave! We've changed our plans. We need both of you to stay on board."

My heart sank. What about my will that I had given to Farzana Sharif? I took the first opportunity to stop her as she walked by. I whispered into her ear:

"That piece of paper I gave you to be mailed in Islamabad, if you are not leaving, please give it to me and I'll try some other way."

"Don't worry" she said. "I slipped it into the hands of one of the departing women passengers. She will take it to Islamabad and mail it. I was worried that some snag will come up for us." I was most gratified. Luckily, I had guessed correctly as to which flight attendant I should give my will because Naila Raza was not near the women passengers when they departed. I felt much admiration for Farzana Sharif and her foresight.

The purser Javed Bhatti came by to check that the front door was tightly sealed as Alamgir had insisted. We were shut off from the outside world once again. The red bump on Bhatti's forehead caused by the pistol whipping still shone brightly.

I wondered whether my last wishes -- my makeshift will -- would ever reach their destination and, if so, would they have legal standing? I was later told that my set of instructions would have had the standing of a regular will, since although it was not notarized and was written on a common paper napkin, it had obviously been prepared under special circumstances.

Was Alamgir's release of the women sexism in reverse? Whatever the real reasons for his action, I was glad for it. This plane was no place for anybody to have to spend time -- man, woman, or child.

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I woke up in the middle of the night dreaming about women's clothes -- dresses and saris, jeans and slacks. The clothes were the ones worn by the women who had walked off the plane in the morning - - bright reds, shocking pinks, turquoise and pastel blues; rayon, polyester, and silk -- it was all a rainbow of colors and a mesh of materials. My mind was wandering to pleasant images, a welcome contrast to the deeply depressing faces I saw around me in the plane.

Images and contradictions: tight fitting jeans and loose fitting slacks; dour faces covered by black veils and radiant faces overly done up with make-up. Pakistan was a land full of inconsistencies and enigmas. The more I visited it, the more I became enchanted with it.

When I had arrived in Karachi on that quiet Sunday, many of the shops were open, but the government offices, banks, and firms were closed, as was the practice. So, I slept for most of the day. In the evening, after talking to a colleague, David Mead, I went to a noisy cocktail party where the alcohol flowed freely, in spite of the government's ban on the sale of alcoholic beverages. The consumption of alcohol ran counter to the teachings of the Koran. This was one of many contradictions in the country, for one could find alcohol for sale in all sorts of places; it was like the United States during prohibition, bootleggers everywhere.

The treatment of women was another glaring and more important paradox. Few women were able to work in good positions in government or businesses; yet, much talent existed in the large cities and towns. In the day, one would see women crossing the street, dressed in black robes and with veils tightly wrapped around their faces; at night in restaurants and private homes, one would find the most alluring women, dressed in glittering saris or tight-fitting denim jeans. The affluent women would be adorned in bright gold and silver jewelry. Was being dressed in purdah robes inconsistent with wearing such jewelry? For a given individual, it was; but for the society as a whole, it was not as there was sufficient heterogeneity in the country to accommodate these different tastes and styles.

The practice of arranged marriages was also a puzzle to many in the West. That's love our style, we organize it here, a woman told me at the cocktail party that Sunday night in Karachi. It works better than your way of doing things in the West -- compare the divorce rates. I tried to convince her of the merits of allowing time for chemistry to develop between two people before any large decisions are made, but it was futile. And who knows, perhaps she was right. Perhaps our parents did know better than we.

With the growth of Muslim fundamentalism around the world, Pakistan was beginning to move toward the type of non-secular society that the Ayatollah Khomeini had established in Iran. But the process was slow and most of my Pakistani friends and colleagues envisaged a society that would indeed remain a far cry from the Ayatollah's vision. Yet the initial signs of fundamentalism were obvious and they were beginning to spread. Interest on loans was declared illegal as the Koran deemed it a sin to charge interest. "Commission," we call it here, my Pakistani banker friends told me -- the arithmetic is the same.

In large cities like Karachi and Lahore, robbers and rapists were occasionally given public lashings, in addition to being handed lengthy prison sentences. However, most of the people with whom I talked assured me that the purpose of the authorities was only to set an example. Apparently, these brutal beatings tended to occur in the cities rather than the small towns and villages in order to send a

powerful signal to the population that such crimes would not be tolerated in contemporary Pakistan. Robbers and rapistsand what about hijackers? What punishment was appropriate for someone who has robbed an airline of one of its planes and has raped the passengers of their peace of mind?

The political system too was full of puzzles and upheavals. Many in the country yearned for stable, civilian leadership, but for most of the forty-five years since independence, the country had been ruled by the army -- one general after another. And it was in the hands of a particular general that our lives lay.

Word Count: 4697

CHAPTER SEVEN
THE GHOST OF ZULFIKAR ALI BHUTTO

The Subcontinent -- a region comprising India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Nepal -- seemed so exotic to me -- its history, its culture, and its traditions. Growing up in South Africa, I had limited contact with Asian people. The few I knew were either shopkeepers or political activists, mostly students or lawyers who did volunteer work, as I did, on the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS). In the 1960s, NUSAS was one of the few organizations that opposed the South African government as vigorously as it could (the more militant organizations, like the African National Congress or ANC, were already banned). At NUSAS meetings I came into contact with some excellent and idealistic Indian lawyers. Some were Hindus and others were Muslims. These lawyers spoke proudly of what leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, and Mohammed Jinnah had done for freedom and independence in their countries. Gandhi in particular had first become involved in peaceful protest when he was thrown off an all-White train in South Africa, the type of train that I took many times as a youth.

It was only when I visited Pakistan and India years later that I realized how peaceful protest could quickly turn to violence in those countries, as happened later in South Africa as well. One of those Indian lawyers in South Africa spoke glowingly about a rising young lawyer in Pakistan by name of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who had been appointed Foreign Minister of Pakistan at the time. Little did I know that this conversation in 1963 would foreshadow for me a specific brush with the events surrounding the life -- and death -- of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto some sixteen years later in April 1979.

Day Four: March 5, 1981, 7:00 a.m. Kabul Runway

After another largely sleepless night, I tried to clear my head with a little water and some dried mango that I had kept from the previous night's supper. I wondered why the presence of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto seemed to loom so large. He was like a ghost hanging over the plane. Alamgir had referred to Ali Bhutto many times during the announcements, and it seemed that the circumstances, and more importantly the feelings, surrounding Bhutto's death were the precipitating factor behind our hijacking. Because it was so important to try and understand the perspective from which Alamgir viewed matters, as well as the perspective of Zia-ul-Haq's regime, I went over in my mind various aspects of the life of Ali Bhutto, to the extent that I knew it at the time.

I supplemented what I knew with information that I prodded out of Engineer Nadir, talking quietly all of the time, while Alamgir was in the cockpit carrying out his morning radio conversations with the control towers. I felt it essential for me to pursue these aspects with Nadir because I was trying to form a judgement as to the prospects that we would get out of this plane alive, which in turn hinged

on just how aggrieved did Alamgir feel about things? In particular, I was intrigued to understand exactly what role Bhutto had played in the evolution of the country that would cause someone to take an extreme step like hijack a plane as his way of revenging the hanging of his former leader.

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At the time of the partition of India in 1947, Mohammad Ali Jinnah played the key role in creating the new country of Pakistan. A brilliant lawyer who believed that Muslims needed to have their own state in which to live, Jinnah set about negotiating with Jawaharlal Nehru and Lord Mountbatten such a landmark agreement. In Mountbatten's opinion, without Jinnah, there would have been no Pakistan. Jinnah and the leaders who came after him presided over a nation that was separated into two parts -- West Pakistan and East Pakistan. West Pakistan consisted of the four contiguous provinces: Punjab, Sind, NWFP, and Baluchistan. East Pakistan was one large province or region, and was situated over a thousand miles from West Pakistan. The nation's capital, and most of the power, was located in Islamabad-Rawalpindi, whereas East Pakistan was governed as a special administrative region, and was later to become the independent country of Bangladesh.

Strong cultural differences existed between the people of West and East Pakistan, despite both being Muslim in orientation. These differences were obvious to the three key figures who crafted the partition arrangements, the Independence of former British India Agreement. In this agreement, the unusual division of Pakistan into two separate regions, with no good transportation links between them, was approved. In fact, there were more similarities between Bengali Muslims and Bengali Hindus than there were between, say, Pakistani Bengalis and Pakistani Punjabis. "Once a Bengali, always a Bengali," the phrase went.

Nevertheless, under the partition arrangements, the Moslem Bengal remained part of East Pakistan, with Dacca as its provincial capital, while Hindu Bengal remained part of India, with Calcutta as the provincial capital. The East Pakistani Bengalis (or Banglas) and another ethnic group, the Biharis (who represented only two percent of the population, ninety-eight percent being Banglas) were in many ways quite different from their West Pakistani counterparts. They were milder in temperament, more artistic, and less militaristic. So it wasn't surprising that the Pakistani army was dominated by officers from West Pakistan, and even more particularly from the Punjab; even the Sindhis felt left out.

For much of Pakistan's first twenty years of existence, the country saw relative peace and calm, first under the civilian leadership of Prime Minister Liaqat Ali Kahn, who was appointed by Jinnah to the post on August 14, 1947. Jinnah became the Governor-General for only a short time as he died from tuberculosis on September 11, 1948. As a result, effective power shifted to Prime Minister Liaqat Ali Khan. In 1950, Field Marshall Ayub Khan became the Commander-in-Chief of the army. On October 16, 1951, Liaqat Khan was assassinated and the leadership passed to President Mirza. However, on October 27, 1958, Ayub Kahn, who only two weeks before had become Chief Martial Law Administrator, sent President Mirza into exile.

Ayub Kahn governed Pakistan from 1958-69, years that saw substantial economic growth and relative political calm. However, soon after Pakistan's ill-fated war with India in 1965, Ayub's hold on power began to disintegrate. In March 1969, President Ayub Khan handed over power to General Yahya Khan.

As it turned out, six year earlier --in 1963 -- Ayub Khan had appointed a young protege, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, as Foreign Minister. Schooled at Berkeley and Oxford, Ali Bhutto excelled as a scholar and orator and once back home, developed a successful law practice. He also took a great interest in political matters and was instrumental in building the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), which had been founded by

his father, Shah Nawaz Bhutto. The Bhuttos were wealthy landowners and, as a result, a powerful family.

In East Pakistan at the time, political activity was increasing with the formation of the Awami League led by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The workers felt that the fruits of their labor in the jute mills (East Pakistan's main export) were being creamed off by the West Pakistani businessmen. Demonstrations and riots increased and Sheikh Mujibur went into hiding in India, as he feared he would be arrested if he remained in East Pakistan. Tension reached a crisis point at the time of the national elections in early 1971. East Pakistan wanted to secede from West Pakistan and form a country on its own. These secessionist moves were naturally opposed by both Ayub and Yahya Khan.

Not unexpectedly, India gave both moral and military support to the Bengali liberation struggle because it believed that it would benefit from a divided and weakened Pakistan. At the same time, India was concerned about what new secessionist aspirations might spring forth from the Hindu Bengalis, if they saw the Bengalis in the north gain independence. For years, India and Pakistan had been skirmishing over the disputed Kashmir region in the northwest corner of India, bordering Pakistan. The secessionist goals of the Kashmiri Sikhs inflamed an already volatile situation. On several occasions, Foreign Minister Bhutto argued the Kashmiri case before the United Nations General Assembly.

In 1969, General Yahya Khan agreed to hold elections. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and his Awami League were allowed to participate. The Pakistan People's Party (PPP) led by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, won 81 out of 138 seats in the West Pakistan parliament, while the Awami League Party, led by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, won 160 out of 162 seats in the East Pakistan legislature. Technically, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman should have been installed as leader of all Pakistan, but Bhutto would not accept that result. He threatened to break the legs of anybody who attended the West Pakistan Assembly for fear that this would imply acceptance of the election results. The Sheikh then organized civil disobedience strikes, which led to his arrest and jailing in West Pakistan. The civil unrest increased and on November 23, 1971, the

Indian army invaded East Pakistan in support of the Bengali resistance movement. West Pakistani army garrisons stationed in Dacca found themselves quickly outflanked by the Indian army and the Bengali Freedom Fighters. The Pakistanis were trapped in a position, which they could not defend militarily. They lacked supply lines to larger forces in West Pakistan, and in fact were encircled. Morale crashed, as many of the troops saw the inevitability of East Pakistan's secession. The fighting was over in little more than a month, but not before nearly one hundred thousand persons lost their lives.

With the army in disarray, Bhutto flew to New York to present Pakistan's case to the United Nations. Even as he was addressing the U. N. that the Pakistani army would fight "for a thousand years," the leadership of the army, recognizing that they were outflanked and outnumbered, surrendered to the Indian army. Bhutto returned to Islamabad and was sworn in as Chief Martial Law Administrator and President of a country that was now half its previous size. In 1973, a new Constitution was drafted and approved, which adopted a parliamentary system of government with Zulfikar Ali Bhutto as Prime Minister.

The country of Bangladesh came into being on December 16, 1971. The idea of creating an East Pakistan that was in effect governed by West Pakistani administrators and distant military personnel was never a tenable plan to begin with, but had been a compromise solution worked out by Jawaharlal Nehru, Lord Mountbatten, and Mohammad Jinnah. Nehru had rejected an earlier plan that called for Calcutta being the capital of a Bangla country because he feared that the Rajah principalities might too break away; also, he did not want to give up historic Calcutta. The tragedy was that it took the loss of tens of thousands of lives and twenty-four years (1947-71) for people to recognize just how unviable the East Pakistan arrangement had been.

Bhutto negotiated an agreement that repatriated thousands of prisoners of war and recognized the new country of Bangladesh, which came into being with a new Constitution in 1972. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman became Prime Minister of Bangladesh and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto became Prime Minister of what

was now called Pakistan. And so the potential for peace at last between the two feuding neighbors, India and Pakistan, was at hand if only the Kashmir problem could be solved.

Bhutto turned his attention to domestic matters. He developed a socialist-oriented economic policy that advocated the nationalization of banking and much of industry. Land reforms were passed, most of which were never implemented, and labor unions were given a lot of power. While this helped the working conditions of those who had jobs, a growing number of people lost jobs as factories became unprofitable and foreign capital investment dried up.

Bhutto was quite unusual: sophisticated, worldly, and a wealthy landowner himself; yet he had an immense appeal on Pakistan's poor and illiterate. He stressed the need for literacy and pushed the government to provide a broad-based education to all. Huge crowds flocked to his rallies, attracted by the flamboyant rhetoric and the yearning for democracy, although Bhutto's style of government was rather autocratic and later on quite despotic. As a landowner, he took great interest in agricultural matters and promised that the Government would embark on a substantial land reform program. But unlike in India, it never happened. Only small amount of land was redistributed to Pakistani small-holders.

On foreign matters, Bhutto concentrated on building a new Pakistan that would overcome the debacle of East Pakistan and would forge friendly ties with China in particular, partly as a bulwark against India. He pushed ahead with developing Pakistan's nuclear capacity to match that of India (this was the one issue on which the military and Bhutto agreed and it would remain the basic foreign policy stance of Pakistan over the next seventeen years, despite constant pressure from the United States for Pakistan to abandon its nuclear program (the Pressler Amendment in the Foreign Aid Program).

Friction with India remained ever-present and at times border skirmishes would erupt in Kashmir where there had already been two wars: one in the late-1950s and another in 1965. In dispute was whether the predominantly Moslem area should be in India or in Pakistan (India controlled about 60 percent of the land area in Kashmir and Pakistani-supported freedom fighters controlled about 30 percent,

with the remaining ten percent controlled by China). This and other conflicts, such as at the Golden Temple in Amritsar, India, demonstrated that the different religions and cultures of the Hindus, the Sikhs, the Punjabi Muslims and the Sindhi Muslims could not effectively be reconciled. In 1976, several Sikhs hijacked an Indian Airlines jet from Amritsar to Lahore in order to draw attention to their grievances. Bhutto's government criticized the hijacking, saying that it was not a legitimate means of expressing political views. The plane and the apprehended hijackers were returned to the Indian authorities. Would Ali Bhutto have done the same with PK326? Or does it revolve around whose political grievance is at stake?

Still, Bhutto's intellect, combined with his gifted oratorical skills, made him a formidable politician and one who was able to capture the imagination and feelings of millions of Pakistanis. Yet, he was a paradox to many. Comfortable in international settings, he liked to show up at rallies wearing a Maoist tunic and worker's cap, having shed his three-button tailor-made suits. He was able to drop his refined Oxford accent and talk directly to the landless and the poor.

It wasn't long before Bhutto ran into friction with the military and the conservative religious parties. He trusted few people outside his immediate family. His eldest child, Benazir Bhutto, was his political confidante. For example, he took her to India to witness the delicate negotiations with Indira Gandhi over the Kashmir dispute. Benazir would later acknowledge how much she learnt from watching her father, and Indira Gandhi as well. They didn't know that years later Indira Gandhi herself would be cut down by the knives of Sikh palace guards in New Delhi.

Through his energy, political skill, and powerful speeches, Ali Bhutto built the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) into a major force, which he controlled tightly. In the early 1970s, Pakistan registered strong economic growth, schools were built, and factories constructed, all of which made Bhutto popular. He tried to tackle the skewed income distribution and would often cite the large wealth of the twenty-two richest families in the country as a problem that he hoped to correct. Under the administrations of Ayub

Khan and Yahya Khan, wealth had become narrowly distributed. However, the intractable problems of poverty and illiteracy made it difficult for him to have any impact in this area.

Towards the late seventies, economic and political deterioration set in. The Kashmir problem began to heat up again, progress on the social programs was slow and Bhutto became increasingly frustrated. Political opponents were shunted aside, the Cabinet became a rubber stamp and one cabinet member was even brutalized by Zia's soldiers for having had the indiscretion to start dinner at 11:00 p.m. before Bhutto was able to arrive at the reception. Other autocratic incidents showed Bhutto's increasing alienation, which led the army finally to move against him. On the night of July 4, 1977, the military ousted Ali Bhutto in a bloodless coup, something quite unusual in a region known for violent overthrows. It showed how much support Bhutto had lost in the end.

The next day General Zia-ul-Haq declared martial law and appointed himself as Chief Martial Law Administrator. The army took over the reins of government, but left most of the civilian structures intact. Pakistan had never tasted democracy for long periods of time, the military having maintained a powerful role in the country's administration since independence. Unlike India, which had largely settled on a parliamentary democracy as the kind of political system it wished to have, Pakistan had never shown a clear vision one way or the other. So the army filled the vacuum.

At first, Zia-ul-Haq kept Bhutto under house arrest ("protective custody against the people's wrath," Zia called it) in a comfortable house in Murree, north of Islamabad. Only the year before, had Bhutto promoted Zia, then a junior Lieutenant-General, to the position of Chief of Army Staff over the heads of several of Zia's superiors. Consequently, Bhutto thought that Zia would be loyal to him, so his ouster took him by surprise.

But Zia had more in mind. He gave orders to the government departments to review several alleged cases of misuse of power, or irregularities committed by Bhutto. One of these was an allegation that Bhutto ordered the elimination of a one-time protege who turned into an opponent, a man by name

of Ahmed Raza Kasuri. In March 1974 in Lahore, Kasuri was ambushed and gunned down. Bhutto and four members of the PPP were charged with Kasuri's murder. Bhutto maintained his innocence throughout. At the trial in the Lahore High Court, the evidence against Bhutto was largely circumstantial; there no eye-witnesses to the attack and an accuser was brought forward to give evidence linking Bhutto to the conspiracy. The prosecution alleged that the four co-defendants were active members of the Pakistan People's Party, although Bhutto's lawyer claimed that they were in fact planted into the fabricated case by Zia's henchmen. The lawyer also said that the confessions had been wrung out of the other accused by Zia's police. The court was not swayed by the defense lawyer's assertions. On March 19, 1978, the court found "Zulfikar Ali Bhutto to be an arch culprit in the Kasuri slaying" and ordered his execution.

By coincidence, I visited Pakistan in March 1978 and therefore was familiar with aspects of the Bhutto trial. I had also exchanged views with a few Pakistani friends who were deeply troubled by the Bhutto case and its implications. They worried for Pakistan's fledgling democracy, which Zia had so abruptly abrogated, and they were concerned about the increasing Islamization of the society. This was especially true of the professional women, who were trying to break into the banking and manufacturing sectors. "Come back in three years time and see if things are the same," they said. So here I was, back exactly three years later, and my trip had been abrogated by Alamgir. Before then, I returned twice in 1979 and kept seeing reports about Bhutto languishing in prison.

Most of the time he was incarcerated in Rawalpindi Central Prison in atrocious conditions: a dark, tiny cell infested with lice and rodents, no clean water to wash at times, a filthy toilet to use, no proper mattress, and a chain around his ankle like a common criminal. During this time, Bhutto's wife Begum Nusrat and daughter Benazir were kept under house arrest in the family's home at 70 Clifton, Karachi. At times, she and Benazir were allowed to see Ali Bhutto, but only once a fortnight. The two Bhutto

women were also jailed for short spells themselves, but each time they were freed and sent back to Clifton.

Bhutto had little light in his cell and could barely see to write notes in preparation for any legal appeal. He never knew whether his wife and daughter would be allowed to enter the prison to see him and several times their visits were canceled or cut short by the unsympathetic prison guards.

The family appealed Ali Bhutto's conviction to Pakistan's Supreme Court. In February 1979, the Court voted four-to-three to uphold the conviction. The Sindhi judges voted to dismiss the conviction, but the Punjabi judges voted to uphold it. The unexplained absence of two of the judges appeared to tilt the balance in favor of upholding the conviction. However, the court was unanimous in recommending that Bhutto's death sentence be commuted to life imprisonment.

Zia-ul-Haq remained steadfast. Some months earlier, Bhutto had said to Zia "you have the power but I have the brains. Together we could make a great team." That comment may have sealed Bhutto's fate. Zia turned down all requests for clemency made on Bhutto's behalf. Bhutto himself would not make an appeal and he forbade his family from filing an appeal for clemency. "An innocent man does not plead for clemency -- only guilty men do that," Bhutto said. Clemency pleas streamed in from all over the world (for example from Maggie Thatcher, for which Benazir Bhutto was always grateful). The U.N. Secretary-General, Kurt Waldheim, made an especially passionate appeal.

These calls fell on deaf ears. Zia would not budge. On April 4, 1979, Bhutto was hanged and his body flown back to Sindh to be buried on the family plot in Larkana. Later, in August 1988, Zia would die in a military airplane crash. I would later see a sketch that showed Zia standing with Bhutto's hanging rope, which eventually wrapped itself around Zia's neck as well. The U.S. Ambassador at the time, Arnold Raphel, and several high-ranking Pakistani military officers were killed in the same plane crash, along with Zia. The cause of the crash was never pinpointed.

Begum Nusrat Bhutto and Benazir were only told of Ali Bhutto's hanging after it occurred. When the two Bhutto women visited Ali Bhutto on April 3, 1979, they were not informed that the hanging would take place in the early hours of the next morning. They were brought to Rawalpindi District Jail from the police training camp where they were being held, and given Ali Bhutto's shalwar kameez, a food box, and his ring. When Nusrat Bhutto and Benazir arrived at Larkana, the body was being prepared for burial. They were shocked to see that it had extensive bruises and lacerations. Bhutto appeared to have been beaten prior to the hanging.

The other three children were abroad during that time; the eldest son, Mir Murtaza Bhutto was at Oxford University pursuing post-graduate studies. Ali Bhutto had urged Murtaza not to return to Pakistan because he felt that his son would be more effective abroad campaigning for his release. Benazir Bhutto had only recently returned to Pakistan after graduating from Oxford, where she was amongst other things, chairperson of the Debating Union. Benazir's days at Radcliffe College in Cambridge, Massachusetts prior to Oxford had served her well and she showed the most promise to pick up her father's mantle. Shahnawaz Bhutto was also abroad at the time, living in the south of France, from where he had campaigned in vain for his father's release. The younger daughter Sanam remained in Pakistan.

There was no remorse on the part of Zia. After the execution had been confirmed, he was reported to have said to his generals, "the bastard is dead!" News of Bhutto's execution led to some unrest in the country, but none that Zia's regime could not deal with easily. By 1982, Nusrat Bhutto developed severe hearing problems and had to visit Paris for treatment. Benazir Bhutto was kept in solitary confinement in Sukkur prison for nearly eight months. When she was released, she was again kept under house arrest at Clifton. Murtaza Bhutto's whereabouts were unknown, although some reports claimed that he was living in exile in Kabul.

Four years later, in August 1985, Shahnawaz died in Cannes, France of what appeared to have been a drug overdose. It was unclear whether his death was the result of suicide, negligence, or foul play. Murtaza Bhutto would later assert that Zia's agents poisoned his younger brother. Meanwhile, the French police charged Shahnawaz's Turkish wife Rehana with criminal negligence, specifically for failing to call the police or an ambulance until it was too late. Rehana's trial was subsequently canceled for some reason (some said political pressure) and she emigrated to the United States. It was in all an extremely tragic period for the Bhutto family.

So Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's end had mirrored in some way the vicissitudes of Pakistan's own fortunes. The major difference is that a country does not die; it only changes its boundaries and constitutional structures at times, as happened to Pakistan in 1971 and the Soviet Union much later. Mankind is not so fortunate, and Steven Spielberg summed it up best when he said of the making of *Schindler's List*: "life is so tenuous, only death is certain." Bhutto's death at age fifty-three was certain.

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Alamgir's voice came over the intercom again and he delivered another long message in Urdu. The tension in his voice was high. I looked around for any clues as to what was being said. The expressions on some of the faces around me changed from apprehension to panic. After about five minutes, which seemed like an hour, the familiar click of the microphone could be heard. Soon after, Alamgir strode down the aisle, a grim expression frozen on his face.

I leaned over to the Pakistani businessman who was sitting in seat 1C at this point. He was the same person who had first explained me the contents of Alamgir's messages when I was in the rear during the first two days. I whispered "What's all that about?"

He responded gravely: "The diplomat on board, Tariq Rahim, is the son of a late-General in the Pakistani army. But sometime in 1987 he worked directly for Ali Bhutto in the capacity of aide-de-campe, or personal secretary to the Prime Minister. After Rahim was no longer ADC, Bhutto being under house arrest at that point, Rahim turned state evidence against his former boss, enabling a conviction, even though the charges were trumped-up and the evidence false in Alamgir's view. Finally, Rahim, being a military man himself, may have even provided critical information to Zia-ul-Haq that allowed the General to mount his coup de tat so swiftly on the night of July 4, 1977."

"So is that why Alamgir hijacked this plane?" I asked.

"No, Alamgir said that it is a pure coincidence that Rahim is on board, but now that he is here, he will be the first to be killed if Zia-ul-Haq doesn't agree to the Al-Zulfikar Organization's demands. Alamgir added that the AZO would prevail, of this he is sure." The businessman clasped his hands as if in empathy with Rahim. "So sad, so sad ..."

"So that's what it's all about," I said. "The ADC who has become the number one target only because he found himself caught on the wrong plane at the wrong time, as with all of us." I clasped my hands as well. "There's a ghost on this plane, I can feel it."

CHAPTER EIGHT
VOICE FROM THE COCKPIT -- THE STOCKHOLM SYNDROME

Seldom has a hijacked hostage been taken into the cockpit and made to do a radio broadcast where the full text becomes available to the media. I never expected that Alamgir would seize me to carry out this function for him. Part of me hated doing it, while another part was thrilled at having to talk by radio a distance of some eight hundred miles about life and death issues -- our lives, and playing a role in preventing our deaths. The opportunity that this afforded me in gaining close contact with Alamgir, which lasted several hours in all made the incident seem all the more surrealistic. As a result, I obtained a clearer understanding as to why Alamgir hijacked the plane, not that I could agree with his goals or his actions. Yet people have often asked me if the Stockholm Syndrome was evident in our case? I will let you be the final judge of this important aspect.

Day Five: Friday, March 6, 1981, 7:00 a.m, Kabul runway

By the fifth day, I felt exhausted, unbearably exhausted. I no longer thought much about eating food, or taking a shower, or changing into clean clothes -- three yearnings that had dominated my thought patterns until now. A desperate need for sleep was now foremost in my mind. Outside, the sky was sometimes cloudy, and sometimes clear -- to the extent that I could see the sky at all out of the corner of my window. If the window shades were pulled down, as Alamgir would insist upon at times, I couldn't even tell day from night. My body had lost its normal rhythm so that I no longer was geared to sleeping at night and staying awake in the day. My internal clock was all screwed up.

I found my attitude towards Alamgir hardening. Yes, he had freed the children and the women (for the most part), but he had also denied release of some sick people, who for humanitarian reasons should have been released within hours of our arrival in Kabul. This was the case for the passenger with an epileptic condition and also the man with a weak heart condition, both of whom were freed only after the Red Cross came on board for the second time in the week. The few pregnant women also should have been released right away. Brief visits by the Afghan authorities and the Red Cross were no substitute for proper medical treatment. I became angrier and angrier, as I recalled these events.

Each day aboard the plane was the same routine other than for some minor variations. Monotony, hopelessness, listlessness -- all we could do was wait and wait. Wait for a variation in the pattern,

a change in the meals (from chicken curry to something else), and a substitution of hijacker faces to look at. I preferred to have Alamgir's face in front of me, if only because he communicated the most. Nasir Jamal's and Ali Butt's faces terrified me more than Alamgir's, even though I realized that the leader controlled everything aboard this plane, and our lives lay in his hands.

As I waited for some resolution, at the same time I also dreaded any such resolution. Would it be peaceful or bloody? Would it mean freedom or would it cost lives? And if I had to wait too long, would I stop caring after a while, and just close my eyes, hoping to fade out? Or would I remain transfixed at times, my eyes staring ahead at Alamgir or whomever else stood there by the front wall of the plane in front of the cockpit door.

I reminded myself to look down because all the experts had said that the last thing one wants to do with a terrorist is to establish eye contact.

"Blend with the others, just fade into the woodwork," I was once told at an army training session. I tried to so fade, shrinking into my seat, but it was impossible. Anyway, the notion of trying to blend was ridiculous. With Alamgir having already confiscated our passports and familiarized himself with everybody, we six non-Pakistanis stood out. In all, rather than shrink into my seat, I yearned to stretch my legs and wave my arms, to the outside. The windows held out the promise, even the allure, of freedom. Freedom to roam around. Yet those same windows were the bars of our cell. In a sense, Alamgir was our jailor and his comrades were our wardens on patrol.

Seat 2A had some disadvantages; there were only three or four faces and the backs of three heads to look at. When I had sat in the rear of the plane, at least I had dozens of heads to look at, as well as those of crew members who were allowed to walk up and down the aisle occasionally, but always one at a time. Interestingly enough, Alamgir let, or more probably required, the flight attendants to do more of the walking than the stewards, presumably because the women had more of a calming effect on the passengers; also, he must have thought that he was less likely to be attacked by the flight attendants than

by their male counterparts. So, Farzana Sharif and Naila Raza had to really work throughout this "flight", and the gratitude of the hostages was obvious.

To help occupy my mind, I played a bit of imaginary chess. I pictured the front inside wall of the plane to be a chessboard. The wall was suitably papered in PIA's standard Islamic design, which from a distance looks like large beige squares on a square wall. I set up my imaginary pieces and advanced my black bishop towards the side row. My opponent -- an imagined Alamgir in this case -- moved his pawns to the middle of the board. I moved my Queen out, he moved his knight, but not to the correct place, so his king was vulnerable. A last move on my part and the game was over -- checkmate. "Scholarship mate" this move was called, and it made me feel good. If only it wasn't just a game that I won; I wanted to win in real life, guns and all.

Was today Friday or Saturday? Time had lost its clock by which I could normally measure things as my watch contained no markings of the days and we were not receiving any newspapers; Alamgir kept them all. The one demarcation used around the world -- the weekend -- was about to arrive and I couldn't even tell what day it was. Everyday for us had seemed the same other than for what occurred inside the plane on that day. So I asked Engineer Nadir what day it was.

"Friday," he said. "At midday you will see people pray in their seats and maybe some on the floor of the aisle."

My thoughts shifted to Washington, to what Gwynn would be doing today, to how her activities would normally shift from work to leisure, from worries to carefree abandon. Not on this weekend, and perhaps not on any weekend hereafter?

Alamgir knew the day. The Afghan authorities kept sending him the daily newspapers, usually Afghan papers, but also the *Pakistan Times* and the *International Herald Tribune* whenever they reached Kabul. Alamgir waited for the newspapers more eagerly than he did for the food, as they gave him vital

information that allowed him to shape his next step and basic stance. The newspapers, I was told by Engineer Nadir, were reporting the Government of Pakistan's hardline attitude.

Although my body clock was all screwed up, my wristwatch continued to function reliably. Never before had I felt so dependent on a watch to keep me centered. Hours, minutes and seconds ... and often I could hear my second hand ticking away.

After breakfast, I asked Alamgir's permission to use the rear bathroom. By now, the front toilet could not be used because it was so badly stopped up. The stench was unbearable. The aircraft's toilets were not in good condition to begin with and the weak generators outside the plane were not helping the flushing mechanisms at all (every time I would depress the lever of one of those high-powered flushing systems found in new planes years later, I would be reminded of how the toilets of PK326 looked ... and how they smelled).

But other than this drawback, I preferred to be sitting in the front rather than in the rear for one simple reason: I was able to overhear much of Alamgir's radio transmissions with the control towers, both Kabul and Karachi. In this way, I could monitor progress on the all-important negotiations front.

As I walked to the rear toilet, I saw Charlotte and Fred Hubbell; behind them was the other American woman, Debbie Weisner. Fred and Charlotte looked up at me and we exchanged brief smiles. I recalled our earlier conversation in the Karachi departure lounge and said to them:

"I guess we missed our dinner date".

Alamgir had stopped to talk to some Pakistani hostages. He was smiling. The fact that he sometimes let down his guard did not change for one moment my belief that he would not have hesitated for a moment to take whatever action he considered necessary. I was not going to be lulled into letting down my defenses.

I continued walking down the aisle. The toilet line was long, so Alamgir deposited me in Ali Butt's care. The man was expressionless. Clearly, it was he, with his cold eyes and angry sneer, who

scared me the most. After using the toilet, I was relieved to return up front and get out of Ali Butt's view.

My watch read 8:00 a.m. The angle of the sun's rays was sending a warm light onto my lap. I clenched my fist and snapped open my fingers repeatedly, to get my blood circulation going. My fingers moved slowly. I thought that I was beginning to experience muscular atrophy from all of the inactivity. Nearly five days had elapsed in which I had not slept for more than an hour or two at a time. My nerves were becoming frayed.

A sharp nudge at my elbow made me turn around. Alamgir was crouching in the aisle with his pistol pointed up at me. He told me to follow him.

My heart pounded. Had the moment come for me to meet the executioner's bullet? I stood up, terrified yet angry, for I hadn't even been given an opportunity to say last prayers. Alamgir pushed me towards the cockpit, his gun shoved hard into my spine. There was enough room for me to sit down because only moments before Pilot Saeed Khan had been kicked out of the cockpit and told to sit down in one of the passenger seats. Alamgir pushed me into the captain's seat on the left, while Copilot Younus remained in his seat on the right. Alamgir sat down in the engineer's seat, behind me and to the right.

My mind was in a whirl -- why was I here? Surely, Alamgir was not about to risk shooting me right here and possibly damaging a critical flight instrument in the process; so he had to have another purpose in mind. But if he was going to interrogate me, would he do so with the copilot present? I soon had the answer. The radio crackled and a distant voice came over the earphones.

"Hello, PK326, this is Delta, Echo, Lima -- Delhi Control Tower -- we now are able to hear you, what is your request? Please speak loudly."

"Delhi??" I said to Jounus. "The Indian capital is more than a thousand miles away. Why Delhi?"

Jounus answered: "India has good relations with the Soviet Union. Alamgir, here, believes that the Indian government can lend a helpful hand in trying to resolve the deadlock with Pakistan, through its contacts with the Soviet Union and Afghanistan. Alamgir nodded as if to verify this interpretation.

He started to scribble something on a yellow note pad. When he was finished, he picked up the microphone and said "Wait Delhi, I come back to you."

Alamgir put the microphone down, adjusted his pistol, picked up the grenade again and another writing pad and pen from a black bag beside his feet, and passed the materials to me. I was amazed by how deftly he moved the weapons from hand to hand and juggled these with the other items. He was deliberate about everything he did, which made him so formidable when it came to my thinking of how I might try to escape.

Alamgir then slid the pen and pad towards me. I realized what he had up his sleeve. Alamgir spoke quickly and clearly: "Write down everything I tell you. You are soon going to talk to Karachi.

"Me! Why me?" I paused and looked at his face, his eyes were full of strain.

"You're not American. You're British. The government likes the British people. They gave Jinnah our country. The government still sends its best boys to train at Sandhurst College. The people in Karachi airport will listen to you more than the Americans."

My heart pounded. My lie about my nationality was holding, it seemed, and I prayed that nothing would go wrong to divulge the real information. Alamgir told me to start writing. He began to dictate: "We are the ..." It was impossible. My right hand trembled so much that the three words were totally illegible. I wished I knew short-hand at that point. An image of my secretary back home flashed before my eyes.

I took a deep breath and turned to Alamgir: "Put that goddamn grenade down," I said, "and then I'll write what you want." My angry reference to the grenade seemed to provoke the response I wanted. He lowered it. I wasn't worried that he would think I was being blasphemous, as I thought a

little anger was warranted at this point. In fact, in my army training, it had been impressed upon us to not be too submissive if we were ever caught in such a difficult situation since that would only encourage a captor to be more vicious.

Alamgir stood up, turned towards the cockpit door, and locked it. He lay the grenade on the floor, but not before he took a screw out that immobilized it. He returned to his statement, dictating more slowly this time: "We are freedom fighters of the Al Zulfikar Organization, which is not connected to the Pakistan People's Party..." I managed to jot all of this down this time. He stopped and took the pad from me and wrote the number of prisoners he wanted released, ninety-two. He emphasized the number by writing it in figures as well.

Alamgir continued with his dictation: "Tell Pakistan government that group is well organized and well-trained freedom fighters. They are getting impatient and time is running out. Their leader warns not to attempt forceful interference to free the 111 passengers. ... If their demands are not met, all occupants will be blown up by time bomb and hand grenades which I have seen on board the aircraft ... This is not idle threat Send this message to U.N office ... in Islamabad and Delhi"

After about twenty minutes, we were finished with the message. Alamgir read it over, reorganizing some of the flow. Then he made me recopy it so that it was clear and legible. With the final message complete, he was ready to transmit it vicariously.

Picking up the microphone, he said: "Hello Kabul, hello Karachi, do you read me?"

So, it was Karachi that he was raising on the radio, and not Delhi.

"This is Kabul, speak now." It was a broken English accent.

"This is Karachi, we hear you, proceed please (fluent English this time). Please speak your message, PK326."

Because of the different abilities in English of the two speakers, it would have been easy for anyone to distinguish the Kabul speaker from the Karachi one, even if they had not identified themselves at the outset.

Alamgir continued: "I have here a passenger who wants to make you a message. He will speak to you ..." Alamgir passed me the microphone.

I pressed the button, cleared my dry throat and said: "Hello Karachi, do you read me?"

"Affirmative."

I continued: "My name is Jeffrey Balkind and I **have to make** the following message from the group that is holding us..." I hoped that Alamgir would not pick up on the fact that I had switched the verb, substituting "have to" for want to. I needed to indicate that I was under duress since I was concerned about the impact my statement might have abroad. I proceeded slowly through the message, speaking as loudly as I could. Alamgir's eyes did not flicker, so it appeared that he had not noticed this little trick on my part. While his command of English was reasonably good, it was not quite good enough to pick up my switch of the key phrase. I breathed a sigh of relief and continued to read out the message, exactly as Alamgir had dictated: (the message follows exactly as received in Washington that day; the message was sent via U.S. Ambassador King Barrington's high priority telecommunications line, as the World Bank line was temporarily down):

PASS TO IBRD FOR DAVID HOPPER

F.O. 12055: GDS 3/5/81 (KING, BARRINGTON)

SUBJECT: (C) MESSAGE FROM HIJACKED PIA PASSENGER

1. THIS MESSAGE IS BEING SENT ON BEHALF OF RESIDENT IBRD REPRESENTATIVE WOLFGANG SIEBECK. MESSAGE TEXT WAS GIVEN TO SIEBECK BY PAK MFA AND IS COPY OF RADIO TRANSMISSION FROM HIJACKED PIA FLT 326 IN KABUL MADE BY JEFFREY BALKIND, WORLD BANK EMPLOYEE AND SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL. AFTER NUMBER

OF ATTEMPTS TO TELEPHONE BALKIND MESSAGE TO IBRD OFFICIALS IN WASHINGTON, SIEBECK ASKED EMBASSY FOR ASJ STANCE IN TRANSMITTING FOLLOWING TEXT TO IBRD VICE PRESIDENT DAVID HOPPER.

BEGIN QUOTE:

- THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE WAS RECEIVED BY PIA KARACHI FROM JEFFREY BALKIND PASSPORT NO. SA 45220 WASHINGTON D.C.

PLEASE RELAY THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE TO WORLD BANK OFFICE, NEW DELHI.

- I, JEFFREY BALKIND ON BOARD PK 326 HIJACKED BY A GROUP OF PEOPLE NAMED AL-ZULFIQAR.

- PLEASE ADVISE UNO, WORLD BANK, DELHI OFFICE TO INFORM MACNAMARA, PRESIDENT OF THE WORLD BANK AND INFORM HIM THAT I AM UNHARMED BUT I AM SERIOUSLY CONCERNED THAT PAKISTAN GOVERNMENT IS NOT RESPONDING TO THE REASONABLE DEMANDS OF AL-ZULFIQAR. THIS HIJACK GROUP ASKS MR. MACNAMARA TO CONTACT GENERAL ZIA AND URGE HIM NOT TO ATTEMPT FORCEFUL INTERFERENCE TO FREE 111 PASSENGERS.

- GROUP ALREADY RELEASED OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN. AL-ZULFIQAR CONFIRMED THAT NEW PLANE MIGHT BRING PAKISTAN ARMY COMMANDO TO KABUL. DO NOT FOOLISH AND JEOPARDIZE THE LIFE OF INNOCENT PASSENGERS AND CREW.

- AL-ZULFIQAR DEMANDS ARE:

(1) RELEASE OF POLITICAL PRISONERS: MESSAGE ALREADY CONVEYED TO PAKISTAN GOVERNMENT AT 1330 GMT ON MARCH 2, 1981. IF DEMANDS WERE NOT MET ALL OCCUPANTS WILL BE BLOWN UP BY TIME BOMB AND HAND GRENADES WHICH I HAVE SEEN ON BOARD THE AIRCRAFT.

- THIS IS NOT IDLE THREAT.

- GROUP IS WELL-ORGANIZED AND WELL-TRAINED FREEDOM FIGHTERS.
- REASONS FOR HIJACKING IS AS FOLLOWS;
- GROUP WOULD NOT ACCEPT ILLEGAL REGIME OF GENERAL ZIA. THEY ARE AGAINST VIOLENCE CREATED BY MARTIAL LAW. FAMILIES OF GROUP LEADERS ARE IN JAIL. GROUP IS FIGHTING FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND JUSTICE IN PAKISTAN. I (BALKIND) INTERMEDIARY AS I AM A UN OFFICIAL AND ALSO BECAUSE KABUL IS HELPFUL BUT NEUTRAL.

- PLEASE RELAY THIS MESSAGE TO UN OFFICE, WORLD BANK IN DELHI AND ISLAMABAD. TELEX NO. 248423 WASHINGTON, RCA TRANSMISSION, ALTERNATE 4400981 TT TRANSMISSION, ALTERNATE 64145 ON WESTERN UNION TRANSMISSION. THIS MESSAGE ORIGINATED ON BOARD PK 326 HIJACKED TO KABUL.

- PLEASE REPLAY TO ALL AUTHORITIES CONCERNED.

- J. BALKIND ON BOARD PK 326 KABUL. END QUOTE.

I signed off the radio transmission by saying: "J. Balkind on board PK326 Kabul." As soon as I finished reciting the message (which seemed to take an hour, although it was only five minutes in all), Alamgir told me to ask the Karachi Airport authorities whether they had heard my message clearly, to which they responded affirmatively. I then asked the Kabul authorities whether they had received the message clearly and again the answer was affirmative. At the time, I cared less whether the Afghan officials had heard the message as they had seemed to be of little use in resolving the situation. But they did hear it and they sent the message in its entirety to the U.N. Resident Representative in Kabul who relayed it to New York. The Pakistani negotiators promised to relay the message to New Delhi, according to Alamgir's instructions (the actual transcript of my message, as received, says: "Please replay to all authorities concerned," so it may have been that a tape recording of the message was made in Karachi Airport Control Tower and then replayed to other parties.

I later found out that not only did the Delhi Control Tower receive the message, but they too made a tape of it. The accidental switch of the two words -- relay and replay -- did not seem to affect the nature of the actions to be taken: the message travelled a circuitous route, from our plane to Karachi, to Delhi, and to New York and Washington. Whatever else its impact may have been, one thing became clear to the recipients: our fate lay in Alamgir's hands and those of Zia-ul-Haq. It was no longer battle stations, but battle lines.

Little did I know at the time that my message would hit the international airwaves soon after Delhi, as the Indian authorities handed it over to the British Broadcasting Service. A friend of mine in London nearly fell out of bed when he heard my voice from the cockpit on the BBC's morning news. He had no idea that I had been hijacked or that I had been in Pakistan for that matter.

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The cockpit was stifling as Alamgir had closed the door tightly, lest others not eavesdrop on our transmission. Also, the tension of having to deal with Alamgir and his weapons in such close quarters added to my sweats.

I slumped back in the seat, as Alamgir talked with Copilot Jounus. My foot accidentally kicked Alamgir's black bag. Since I did not have my shoes on, I was able to run my toes over the bag; I felt something long and cylindrical inside, dynamite sticks perhaps? Younus lit a cigarette and offered Alamgir one. He declined the offer, probably because he was not going to be fooled into putting his weapons down if he had to accept the cigarette offer. Such ruses had been known to be used by airline crews, and I would later learn that when our plane touched down in Kabul, the first thing that Alamgir did was to search the cockpit thoroughly for any hidden weapons. PIA planes carried no such hidden weapons, in those days, I was later told.

Yet international airlines, perhaps more experienced in these matters, did devise such tricks. In a bungled hijacking of a Pan Am jumbo jet at Karachi airport in September 1986 in which 20 people died and the hijackers belonging to Abu Nidal's group were captured, the pilot managed to escape when he threw a hidden rope out of the cockpit window and slid down to the tarmac; as a result, there was no one to fly the aircraft. In a JAL hijacking in the mid-1970s, the captain killed the hijacker with an axe that had been stored in the cockpit in case the door ever had to be chopped down, including in the event of a crash landing, let alone a terrorist incident.

I closed my eyes, feeling exhausted from my radio transmission. The tension of trying to talk clearly on the airwaves in so vital a situation, where the slip of one word could have had major consequences, was one thing; the proximity of that grenade now held head high by Alamgir again was another. There was a good reason for his holding it that way. In the army, when our instructors taught us how to handle grenades, they impressed upon us that if one has a pistol in one hand, the only way to detonate the grenade without disturbing the pistol is to use one's teeth to extract the pin. The proficiency with which Alamgir handled his weapons demonstrated how the cards were stacked against me if I had to try and attack him.

After a few minutes of contemplating all of this, I opened my eyes to see Alamgir leaning back in his seat. He looked more relaxed, so I tried to strike up a conversation.

"Tell me, do you think President Zia-ul-Haq will release the prisoners whom you are seeking?" I asked. Before Alamgir could answer, I added: "Please lower that grenade. I'm not going to attack you." The barrel of his gun was about three feet away.

He lowered it. "That message you sent ... it will be very important."

"I didn't have any choice, did I?"

"No. Maybe Zia will listen."

At this point, Younus got up to go to the bathroom and Alamgir told him to take a rest in the passenger section. I took this opportunity to try engage him in a deeper conversation. He was now much more cordial, almost likeable, were it in another setting.

I made the opening foray. "I'm interested in a couple of things. You say that you are from the Al Zulfikar Organization, but what does your organization really want and why did you take this plane?"

"I've told you before, and all the others on this plane -- we want to overthrow Zia-ul-Haq and we want the release of ninety-two prisoners. Some of them are my relatives, they are political prisoners, not criminals. They've done nothing wrong. Zia doesn't care about the poor people and he was not elected. He's a dictator. We will win our struggle. You will see." Alamgir smiled.

I was surprised at his willingness to talk so I capitalized on the situation. "What will happen if Zia doesn't release the prisoners?"

"I can't tell you that. We have a plan, a good plan. And here in Kabul I have more people to help me. They will come, you wait."

Feeling more confident that I could ask him some questions that were perplexing me without offending him, I continued: "Tell me, you waited until we were very near Peshawar before you took over the plane. Why was that? What if the pilot would've already been descending and we couldn't gain enough altitude to change direction?"

Alamgir hesitated for a minute before responding: "I knew where we were, just above Mianwali. The plane was still high enough to change direction. It was very important for us to not start too soon as Zia has many jet planes at air bases near Peshawar and Islamabad. He could send have sent those planes to shoot us down, or force us to land where he has army people. So this was a good time for us to take over the flight. We could leave Pakistan airspace quickly and Zia's men couldn't get us." I would later learn that this strategy was consistent with that of many other hijackings -- they tend to occur

when the aircraft is near the border of a country and not at the outset after take-off because that minimizes the risk of being intercepted by air force planes.

I then asked him the question that was bugging me most. "And why did you let that man go, the one who came on board on a stretcher?"

Alamgir's face darkened. "I can't tell you that. Go back to your seat now!"

Please, I have one last question: "Would you have let the women and children off if that little boy hadn't pulled on your *shalwar kameez*? Is that what made you release them?"

"They were tired, very tired. You are tired too, but men must stay, they can take bad situations. For women, it's different. They can't stay for a long time, so I let them go."

"But you kept them here for three days all of the same."

"Three days are nothing!"

"How long do you think we'll stay here?"

"I don't know. It's up to Zia."

As I sat there looking at Alamgir, I began to feel some empathy. It was a strange feeling. Two days ago, even yesterday, I was angry and scared. Today I felt different, as though the fear had lifted somehow. Was it because Alamgir had pushed me into the cockpit and thrust this special role on me, or was it because I had come to understand him better, his beliefs and concerns? I looked at his face carefully, his refined nose, his dark brown eyes, and his long shining hair. In another setting, I could even have befriended him.

I started to think about the Stockholm Syndrome, the strange phenomenon of mutual bonding between captors and hostages that was first put forward as a concept in 1973. In that case, a prison convict, named Olsson and a second convict held up a bank in Stockholm and kept four hostages in a vault for six days. Three of the hostages were females, one of whom allowed Olsson to fondle her; she drew the line at having intercourse with Olsson. The second woman tried unsuccessfully to talk Prime

Minister Olaf Palme into letting Olsson escape with the hostages. The male hostage also displayed sympathetic behavior. When the police eventually teargassed the vault, all four hostages said they would only leave if their captors could leave as well. The degree of empathy evident in this incident shocked the psychologists at first, until they came to link it with the research that was ongoing on behavior patterns withdrawal-submission-responsiveness between among captives and their captors. And so, the phenomenon of the Stockholm Syndrome became popularized, although since ancient times one finds illustrations of hostages joining their captors. What the Swedish psychologists articulated, however, was that the wild fluctuations in emotions that can give birth to the bonding can set in anytime between 15 minutes and 75 minutes into a hostage situation. Once the situation is into its first few days (or weeks), anything can happen.

In documenting the wild fluctuations that can occur in hostage's emotions, the psychologists traced the surge of adrenalin, the development of fatigue and stress, and the onset of fear, and even panic. The hostage soon gets buffeted by conflicting desires: part of him wants to do something active to try and bring matters to a head; however, another part goes into a state of partial or total withdrawal. And these responses tend to fluctuate back and forth during day or night.

The strange case of Patty Hearst was a better-known illustration of the Stockholm Syndrome. Here, a bond developed between members of the Symbionese Liberation Army and their kidnapped victim, Patty Hearst, the heiress daughter of Randolph Hearst, publisher of the San Francisco Examiner. Miss Hearst was held captive for a few weeks before she joined her kidnappers in robbing a bank in the bay area. In her trial, the defense lawyers unsuccessfully argued that she had been brainwashed. After serving nearly ten years in prison, Miss Hearst was pardoned by President Reagan, partly on account of the issues surrounding Stockholm Syndrome or otherwise known as "the just world hypothesis".

Was I exhibiting any semblance of Stockholm Syndrome in this situation? I could not condone what Alamgir had done, risking the lives of innocent people. The Stockholm Syndrome seemed to have

been more evident in situations where there had been male captors and female hostages trapped in a secluded area -- not in an airplane surrounded by more than a hundred others.

I wondered whether any of the other passengers might be feeling some vestiges of Stockholm Syndrome. The elderly Pakistani woman nearby me did refer to "my son" when she asked Alamgir when we would be departing Kabul or leaving the plane. She had talked to him in a soft manner; perhaps she felt some empathy with his concerns. But that is not the same thing as saying she had Stockholm Syndrome.

This led to my next question: "Alamgir, why is that elderly woman still on board, the one sitting next to me on the right?"

"I won't let her son go. Men have to stay on the plane -- all of the men. I told her that she can go, but she won't go unless her son goes as well. This is not possible."

Alamgir's statement emboldened me to ask my last question: "Why did you let that man go, the one who came onto the plane on a stretcher? I saw him, he was the only one to leave with the women and children when the two buses came on Wednesday?"

A look of irritation returned. "That man was sick, very sick. He had to go."

I looked at Alamgir, and his slight smirk told me that he was not telling the truth; it just could not be. My "man-on-the-stretcher theory" had to be correct.

Alamgir said it was time for me to go back to my seat. I was tired beyond what I thought possible at this point and the tension of the radio conversation had made me feel even more exhausted. However, I also felt exhilarated that I had been put in contact with the outside world. I prayed that we would get some response. In all my months of operating a two-way radio in the military, I never once thought that I would have to carry out such a vital broadcast.

I walked back to my seat. As I slumped down, an overwhelming thirst came over me. I signalled to Ali Butt that I needed a drink, clutching my throat to make him take my request seriously. He turned

around and looked at me with the same sneer on his face. He understood what I wanted and indicated that I could get up and walk over to the water dispenser outside the galley. I leaned over -- it was bone dry. Butt laughed, shoved me back into my seat, and moved down the aisle. He was a manipulator and a sadist.

Alamgir came by. Having gotten to know him better, and having done him a favor in a sense (not that I had any alternative), I asked him if I could get a drink of water, thinking that he would be more responsive than his helper. He lowered his pistol, allowed me out of my seat and took me over to another water dispenser, this one in the galley. Needless to say, there were no paper glasses left. So I cupped my dirty palms, let the water run over them, and took a long, long sip. I almost drained the large blue bottle, staring down at Alamgir's brown shalwar that reached just above his sandals. It was an even trade: I did a radio broadcast for him; he gave me a drink of water.

Countless times over the years have I stood at drinking fountains, in airplanes and in buildings, and never once have I forgotten the memory of that drink, the one taken beside Alamgir's brown shalwar kamiz. I can even remember his scent, a local version of 4711 *Eau de Cologne*.

I stood up and asked Alamgir if I could remain standing as I dreaded having to sit again ... sit and sit, five days of sitting. He agreed. My blood raced and my body tingled at the belief that I would be able to stay standing for a while in an area that was not limited to a toilet line.

Alamgir began to talk freely. He told me about his days at Karachi University.

He was saddened to see the increased poverty in his country and he was angry that nothing was being done about it. He was also deeply distressed that the students on the campus were being harassed by the government and said that many things needed to be changed in Pakistan. But, most of all, he was bitter about what happened to Prime Minister Ali Bhutto, something, he said, that he could never forgive.

While he was at university, he went by his family name (Khan Tippu), but know he liked to use the name *Alamgir*.

"It means Conqueror of the World. Do you like it?"

"Not bad," I said.

I guess that I was becoming more comfortable with our leader. I knew that I would never fall prey to the Stockholm Syndrome. I knew the importance to him of the radio transmission that we had done and in return he was granting me the privilege of a window into his thinking. So having come to first base of sorts with him, I thought that I might try to explain my side of things.

"These issues that you talk about are domestic ones. Why should the foreigners be caught up in it? Can't we be released, while you sort out your differences with Zia's government? The negotiators should be asked to hurry up."

Alamgir fumed "What negotiators?.....it's all a show." His expression was full of disgust. "You foreigners are the problem."

His eyes glowered. Again, he was the menacing hijacker, not the social commentator of a few moments earlier. The sharp swings in his moods told me to be on the lookout. He raised his pistol again, and shifted the grenade. To be able to handle his weapons, his note pads, his bags, and all of us with such consummate skill must have required some training somewhere. Alamgir, clearly, was no ordinary university student.

At some level, Alamgir was naive and did not seem to grasp some basic ironies: he complained about Zia not doing enough to curb the growth of crime in Pakistan, as though a hijacking was not a crime. Yet to Alamgir, it wasn't, but more like a tactical battle in which he was trying to avenge what he thought was a huge injustice -- the hanging of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. Whatever the facts in the case, it didn't excuse the means by which Alamgir had chosen to carry out his struggle. On this point, I could not equivocate, so what little empathy I may have felt earlier, simply vanished.

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Friday, March 6, 1981, 10:00 p.m., Washington

Jim Theodores put down his umpteenth cup of coffee and wondered when the next communication would be received from the operations control room in Rawalpindi, or from the Bank's office in Islamabad. He had just finished talking to Gwynn Davies and told her that there was nothing new to report. It had been a quiet day, which was almost as bad as when a lot would happen. The eeriness of the silence was getting him down, and he wished that he was back in Kabul where he could be in closer in touch with the situation. Earlier in the day, he had sent a message to a close contact in Kabul, hoping that he could obtain some hard information as to what was occurring on board the plane. However, this initiative drew a blank since his contact was unable to get into the Kabul Airport operations room. The Afghan authorities had also turned down all requests for information other than what they were providing to Pravda and Radio Moscow correspondents.

A secretary walked in flashing a long telex that had just come in from New Delhi.

"Mr. Theodores, I've got something for you here, it seems that Jeff Balkind has been talking on the air. This communication is from New Delhi, not Islamabad."

Theodores read the telex message intently. It started: The following message was received by PIA Karachi from Jeffrey Balkind on board PK326. Quote.... "I Jeffrey Balkind on board PK326 ..."

Theodores nearly did a double-take. He realized from the wording that this could not have been Balkind's own words. He would never had referred willingly to "the illegal regime of General Zia." He read the rest of the message and then called Gwynn Davies. He had better put a positive spin on the message as he thought that some people might be concerned by the contents, and the tone.

"Gwynn, I have news from your husband. It looks like he's been writing long messages again but this time they don't appear to be his words."

Theodores started to read Gwynn the message. She listened carefully. When Theodores had gotten to the middle, she interrupted: "Jim, what's that stuff in the message about time bombs. I didn't know that there was dynamite on board. You never told me that."

"Gwynn, I don't think it would've been any easier for you to have known days ago that there was dynamite on board. You have to understand that we ourselves were not informed about it by the Pakistani government until someone in the local press picked up a reference to dynamite in one of the transcripts of the lead hijacker's Urdu messages. Since the international press had not cottoned onto it yet, I decided to not tell you. Please trust me -- there are some things which it doesn't help to know as and when they occur, while there are other things that of course you will be told about immediately. Knowing this, wouldn't have helped at all in this case, especially since there is nothing that you or I -- or anyone else for that matter -- can do about explosives."

Gwynn countered: "I know we are all helpless, but I need to be kept informed. Isn't that what Hopper promised me on the first day?"

"Okay, I'll let you in on more details as they occur. But remember, dynamite is not lethal until it is rigged up, and there's no indication that the leader of the group is contemplating this drastic action. Usually, if such a step is resorted to, it is at the end of an incident when the terrorists leave the plane. That's what happened in Jordan in 1970 -- three empty planes were blown up on an airfield somewhere. Anyway, the Pakistani government is trying to find out through the Red Cross whether their representative who entered the aircraft in the first few days noticed any containers or bags that could've contained such dynamite sticks. For all we know, it is just be a hoax, which Jeffrey was forced to include in the message. Just because he said "which I have seen" doesn't in fact prove that Jeffrey has seen any dynamite or time bombs as he refers to them. That's the trouble with these incidents -- you don't know what to believe. The SWAT guys will have the real information, one hopes."

"Who are the SWAT guys?" Gwynn asked.

"The special tactical units, who have been trained to handle these sorts of incidents. I'm told, however, that nothing will be launched while the plane is in Kabul. The risks are too high. The units will go in only where there is a reasonable chance of success."

Jim's caveat did little to reassure Gwynn. "Reasonable for whom,for Jeffrey who might be sitting near the front door when those special tactical units, as you so blandly call them, come blazing into the plane. Jim, I shudder to think of the prospect."

"Gwynn, I'm sorry, but that's the language used in this crazy business. The telexes and wire services keep streaming in and I get caught up in it. I know what you mean. I'm sure that the Pakistanis will not do anything foolish. Everything I have seen up to now is consistent with a government that is being careful and considerate. Let's just stay calm until we get more news. Anyway, let's not dwell on this. You remember how upset it made you to overhear some colleagues glibly talking about troops -- same thing as a SWAT team -- being called in to blow off the nose of the aircraft. What's the difference here?"

There was a long pause. Gwynn replied: "I'm sorry, but this message from Jeffrey worries me even more than before. Naturally, I was pleased to hear it, to know for sure that he is still alive in that plane. But I worry what it portends regarding his actual situation inside there, I mean the fact that he was made to be the terrorists' mouthpiece."

"But Gwynn, we don't know why that happened. It might be because he said that he was British, according to the list of passengers which the Red Cross supplied to me. You see, the hijackers have been asking for the British government to intervene, given its history in the region. Apparently, Maggie Thatcher made a special plea for Bhutto's life before he was hanged. The hijackers made some reference to that fact. We also know that the hijacking has been motivated by what happened to Ali Bhutto two years ago, and therefore if Jeffrey was indeed seen as a Brit, it could explain why he was the one drafted to do the transmission. We know it was a forced message because of Jeffrey's reference to "have to

make" a message. So don't be alarmed about his role. I wouldn't read much into it one way or the other. What it does do, however, is give us a reading as to where things stand."

"I guess you're right. I'll come to your office tomorrow to get a copy of the message when I can read it more carefully." Gwynn was about to hang up, when she asked Theodores one last question:

"An especially aggressive news reporter called our house this morning asking for confirmation as to whether my husband was on board the PIA plane, and if so, what's his nationality?" Theodores fumed. "These guys are like pesky flies. Just say 'no comment', and hang up the phone if you wish. I did just that with a British reporter yesterday. The Press can be quite harmful in a sensitive situation like this."

Theodores turned his attention to his secretary, Hisako, who was lingering in front of his desk, telex in hand.

"Mr. Theodores, another message has come in from Islamabad. It contains the same radio message of Mr. Balkind, but this time Mr. Siebeck has added a comment that the Foreign Secretary of Pakistan is asking the Bank to formally disassociate itself from Mr. Balkind's message."

"What's eating them, Hisako?"

"They apparently are bothered by Mr. Balkind's reference to the illegal regime of General Zia."

Theodores looked incredulous. "For Chrissake", he said, "it's obvious that Balkind is under duress and they should understand that! If we had to issue any statement, it would only fuel the fires. We just won't do it. I need to brief Mr. Pajmans right away." He dialled Pajmans' home number. It was busy.

As Theodores was about to get up from his chair, Hisako just stood there. It was most uncharacteristic for her to linger, a person who kept conversation to a minimum.

"What's up, Hisako?"

"It's not just because I'm Japanese that I know this, but you might remember that our country experienced two of the earliest and most well-known hijackings. In 1970, a Japan Airlines Boeing 727 was hijacked to North Korea. Nine students carrying swords and knives hijacked the plane. It was one of the first acts of terrorism by what became known as the Japanese Red Army, or the JRA. The hijacking was known as "The Yodo-go Incident" or the "Samurai Nine". The name of the plane was *Yodo-go*. You know those large white letters that you often see painted on the left side of the aircraft near the front doors. Do you ever read those names? They are meant to carry good luck."

"Sure, like PAN AM's Clipper -- a ship sailing in the night over smooth seas. Theodores used to look closely at the various names of aircraft as he entered their front doors. It would be more than seven years later in December 1988 when Theodores was startled to see pictures of a PAN AM nose cone named "Queen of the Seas" lying in a farm field in Lockerbie, Scotland. That aircraft, which served as the doomed flight of PA103, was the very same aircraft in which he had flown on at least a half-dozen occasions.

Hisako continued: "Well, the Yodo-go incident was followed a year later by another JAL hijacking. Again some terrorists from the Japanese Red Army along with two members of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) hijacked a Boeing-747 to Benghazi Airport in Libya where they blew the plane up. One person died in that incident. The hijackers wanted to obtain release of the Samurai Nine. One thing leads to another, Mr. Theodores. It's the same thing here with this PIA hijacking. The terrorist, what's his name ... Alamgir ... is seeking release of his relatives whom the government only recently arrested."

Theodores was amazed by Hisako's knowledge, especially regarding the JAL hijackings. "Hisako, how do you know all of this? Most people don't remember these incidents years after the event, unless they are somehow connected to the people involved."

"Well, you see Mr. Theodores, I didn't tell you this last week as you were too busy, but I once worked for Mr. Balkind, for three years in the early seventies. I feel as though it's my family inside that plane. When the incident broke out, I went to Crown Books and bought a book by a prominent politician, Bunsei Sato, who was once Japan's Vice-Minister of Transport in charge of Parliamentary Affairs. Sato-san substituted himself as a hostage into that second JAL hijacking. When he addressed the Diet the morning after the hijacking broke out, he said that he would travel to the Middle East and try to enter the plane as a hostage, if the hijackers would guarantee the safety of the hostages in return. Sato-san arrived in Dubai and talked with the hijackers. Then he got into the plane before it left for Libya. He was a brave man."

Theodores didn't exactly share this view. "You would never see the head of an American or European airline doing what Minister Sato did. It's not our way. For one thing, it creates a bad precedent, as though one is giving into terrorism. I guarantee you, Hisako, that you will never see the Chairman of PAN AM, Mr. Acker, or Lord King of British Airways for that matter, substituting themselves as hostages. It just won't happen. Similarly, you'll not see Major-General Rahim Khan volunteer himself as a hostage into the PIA incident. It would send the wrong signals, and I agree with that."

Hisako fell silent. She felt as though she had been misunderstood. Plucking up the courage to respond to her boss as it wasn't the Japanese way, she said: "It's not so simple, Mr. Theodores. Minister Sato felt noble, in the best traditions of a Samurai warrior. He was willing to commit harakiri if need be. That's what he believed he was doing when he entered the JAL aircraft in Dubai. JAL's President, Shizuo Asada, was also willing to substitute himself, but they decided that one high-level person was enough. We Japanese see the issue of accountability differently. In Japan, heads of corporations resign when something seriously goes wrong, even if there is no connection to them."

I'll bring you Bunsei Sato's book tomorrow, Mr. Theodores. Look for it on your desk. It's called "*Hijack -- 144 Lives in the Balance.*"

Theodores thanked her: "That's four less hostages than in the case of PK326. Let's see how things turn out. We don't have a Sato-san, remember."

Hisako bowed, but not as low this day, and certainly not as low as when her Embassy officials would enter the room from time to time. She walked out briskly. Perhaps Theodores, a Westerner in outlook, could never understand what she was saying. Some things were different, and they would always remain different. Just because we work in the same international organization, it does not mean that we see the issues the same way. There is no right, no wrong -- just a different approach.

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The next morning, when Gwynn sat down in Theodores' office, he ~~looked~~ pointed to a page form a telex received from the Government of Pakistan.

"The officials were upset by some of the sentences in Jeffrey's message. Not to worry, we told them that it is obvious that he is under duress. Hell, what do they expect, freedom of speech in a situation like this!"

Gwynn read the message. She was relieved to have this confirmation that I had not been harmed.

Theodores then passed her the news message that had just come in from Agence France Press:

AFP EE09
AHL W
Hijack - Bank.

United Nations, New York, March 6 (AFP)

A World Bank official trapped in the Pakistan International Airways (PIA) Boeing hijacked to Kabul on Monday has appealed to U.N. Secretary General Kuri Waldheim to intervene in the drama, a U.N. spokesman said here.

The spokesman said that the official, identified as Jeffrey Balkind, had been allowed to relay his message via the Kabul Airport control tower.

Mr. Waldheim has asked the Pakistani Government to avoid anything that might put further passengers in danger, but the spokesman gave no details of his message.

One passenger, Tariq Rahim, Second Secretary at the Pakistani Embassy in Teheran and son of a retired army general, was shot earlier today.

The U.N. spokesman said that Mr. Waldheim had received a message from Afghan Foreign Minister Mohammed Dost.

LAS/AFP 061912

Theodores smiled and said: "A Pakistani newspaper has even gone so far as to claim that Jeffrey had a conversation with Kurt Waldheim in the Control Tower. He passed her the Pakistan Business Recorder article that he had only moments before received from Siebeck in Islamabad.

APPEAL TO WALDHEIM

Appeal to Waldheim

United Nations, March 6: A World Bank official trapped in the Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) Boeing hijacked to Kabul on Monday has appealed to U.N. Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim to intervene in the drama, a U.N. spokesman said here.

The spokesman said that the official, identified as Jeffrey Balkind, had been allowed to relay his message via the Kabul airport control tower.

The U.N. spokesman said that Waldheim had also received a message from Afghan Foreign Minister Mohammed Dost. -

As Gwynn finished reading the article, Theodores told her that to the best of his knowledge, I had never left the plane.

"The reporter is confusing the word 'via' the Kabul Control Tower with a message that gets sent over the wires of that control tower. I ask you, how can Jeffrey have had a conversation with Kurt Waldheim? Absurd! But it makes good reading in Pakistan."

Gwynn did her best to smile. She knew that Theodores was only trying to cheer her up.

Gwynn rose to go to her office, one floor below his. "Perhaps by tomorrow Jeffrey and all of the others on that plane will be released," she said.

"Insh' Allah" Theodores sighed. He gave Gwynn a much-needed hug.

Theodores sat back in his chair. He felt so weary, partly because he had stayed up all night reading about the JAL hijackings. Hisako hadn't told him that one of the interesting aspects in the second JAL hijacking was that the PFLP hijacker spoke better English than the principal government negotiator, Defense Minister of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Sheikh Muhammad ibn Rashid Al-Maktoum. The hijacker had attended the University of Cairo; the Sheikh, son of the UAE Prime Minister, had no college education. So the hijacker was extremely polite in all his radio transmissions to the Minister, in deference to his position. From what Theodores was able to ascertain, the lead hijacker of the PIA plane had also been reasonably polite up to this point. Not that politeness in itself was important, other than to indicate the state of the hijacker's mood -- and his mental balance. But would it stay that way on board PK326?

CHAPTER NINE
DEATH ON THE RUNWAY

When a hijacking escalates into murder on board, the stakes are ratcheted upwards irreversibly. The hijackers know that they have crossed the huge divide that separates a regular hijacking from one where a premeditated killing occurs. This is quite different to killings that occur as a result of crossfire in a SWAT shootout, for example. In the 114 important hijackings that have been chronicled by Professor Peter St. John in the period 1968-89, no more than a half dozen incidents have involved murder. Several hijackings have ended up killing dozens of passengers who got caught in crossfire when a SWAT unit stormed the plane.

In the penal codes of most countries, first-degree murder is usually punishable by death or life imprisonment, whereas killings in a shootout, to the extent they are prosecuted, would be considered as manslaughter. Given the seriousness with which the authorities in most countries view hijackings, even second degree killings have merited life imprisonment. In the TWA hijacking of June 1985, Ali Hamadi was sentenced to life imprisonment in Germany for killing U.S. navy diver Robert Stehem.

Day Five: Friday, March 6, 11:00 a.m., Kabul Runway

It had been a quiet morning. I was reading *Freedom at Midnight*. I heard a shout and looked around. Alamgir was dragging the Pakistani diplomat, Tariq Rahim, to the front of the aircraft. Nasir Jamal pushed Rahim from behind. Ali Butt took up the rear pointing his gun back down the aisle, lest anyone jump in to help Rahim. They stopped right next to me. Rahim's terrified face was no more than ten feet away. Alamgir shouted something incoherent at Rahim. A mumbled reply followed, but I couldn't tell what was said. Rahim clasped his hands in a desperate plea.

There was fire in Alamgir's eyes. His hair bristled and he spat out angry words, Urdu and English mixed in with each other. He slapped Rahim in the face, back and forth, back and forth. Jamal punched Rahim in the side of his face, which was swollen by now. I watched, horrified, as Alamgir pulled out his pistol from inside of his *shalwar kameez*, cocked the trigger and shot Rahim three times in the back and neck. It happened so quickly, yet that image became seared in my mind.

One of the bullets whined past me. I ducked, not wanting to catch another which I thought might ricochet off the walls. I kept my head down; my body quaked in my seat. My ears rang from the loud echo of the bullets and my eyes smarted from the acrid smell of spent gunpowder.

Rahim lay slumped across seat 3A, bleeding profusely.

Alamgir, Jamal and Butt, all together, continued to shout at him, for what purpose I could not know, as he had lapsed into unconsciousness. They pulled him by one ankle, face down, along the aisle. The other foot knocked against each seat as it went by. A trail of blood marked where his head and shoulder scraped the aisle carpet. Butt opened the rear door and gesticulated wildly with his arms. Alamgir shoved Rahim's bleeding body outside and Jamal pulled the door shut . That was the last I saw of Tariq Rahim.

Alamgir then ran up the aisle, into the cockpit, and picked up the radio microphone. I heard him say: "Send ambulance or jeep. Pick up passenger lying on the ground. Do not send any soldiers!"

Within moments, an ambulance approached the plane. A man in a white coat and a soldier ran out. They lifted Rahim's crumpled body into the ambulance and sped away. I would later learn that Tariq Rahim died not of bullet wounds, but of massive internal head injuries from the impact of landing head first on the concrete tarmac. They threw him out of the plane as if he was a sack of potatoes. A grey, concrete tarmac, with tire skids, to mark the end of a life.

The depth of hatred that Alamgir and his cohorts must have been feeling towards Tariq stunned me. I became morose and angry. As my anger rose at what the hijackers had just done, I found myself referring under my breath to the words assailants, terrorists, criminals, ... words that I had not used most of the week in thinking about Alamgir. The words comrades, helpers, students, were all gone. We had entered the world of murder.

Witnessing a killing at close range was an unforgettable experience. It was an image that I was never able to forget.

An eerie silence descended on the plane that night. I had never experienced such a silence before. Needless to say, I could not touch the dinner. One would have thought that the staff of ARIANA ground services would have realized that sending dinner aboard on this night was unnecessary. Yet, surprisingly, some people did eat. I guess people react differently to certain incidents. After all, a butcher in an abattoir is still able to eat his dinner at night, and the Nazis were able to eat theirs. The sickness I felt in my stomach added to the aching of my head and the stiffness of my bones. I forced myself to hold my vomit down. The thought of throwing up in an already clogged toilet was revolting.

I forgot about trying to get any sleep this night. The full moon was particularly bright outside and the air inside the aircraft was again very cold. The generators had started up earlier, but had soon sputtered out as if to match the mood of the plane. My shivering that night was not on account of the cold. I could smell the blood on the seat to the right of me, immediately across the aisle. The elderly Pakistani woman shook her head in shock and mumbled to herself.

So Alamgir had indeed crossed the great divide between seizing an aircraft, of which there had been many such incidents, and murdering a passenger, of which there had been relatively few such incidents. The stakes had changed irreversibly. He must have known that the punishment for killing one person was the same as for killing dozens of people -- capital punishment or life imprisonment. Consequently, he had nothing to lose by killing all of us.

Gone were any parallel feelings of fear mixed in with excitement at the theater I had been watching all week. Instead raw fear gripped me. I was no longer interested in mind games between captors and hostages, and neat abstract concepts by psychologists trying to explain something that is quite simple. If one witnesses a murder -- no matter what the reasons -- it has to change one's perspective about the event.

The gun barrel had smoked, the bullet had echoed, and blood had flowed. It was fairly simple and repugnant to me. My perspective had changed: I could no longer look at Alamgir without thinking

that he had murdered Tariq Rahim. It mattered not that the accused man had been a former military man, turned-diplomat of a government that was considered repressive by Aalngir, or that he had done something unpardonable in the hijackers' eyes. The fact was that Alamgir had taken the law into his own hands, and if he could do that in the case of Tariq Rahim, he could do it to others. My blood chilled and I felt immobilized. Gone was any vestige of the Stockholm Syndrome. The battlelines were clear now.

Word Count: 1241

CHAPTER TEN
THE EMERGENCY CABINET MEETING

Day Six: Saturday, March 7, 1981, 11:00 am, Rawalpindi

An emergency cabinet meeting was convened in the offices of the Chief Marshal Law Administrator (CMLA) Secretariat building to discuss the tragic turn of events in the PIA hijacking. The CMLA conference room was the largest meeting room in the building. Ornately decorated with two large paintings that hung on the wall on the left from where the President would normally sit at the head of the table, the room had seen many a stormy meeting take place over the years. The painting on the left-hand side of the entrance door showed an Islamic scene with a young boy floating in the sky praying to Allah. The painting on the right portrayed one of the important historical figures from centuries previously. Behind the President's seat, the dignified face of Mohammed Jinnah in portrait stared down intently. Copies of this portrait painting could be found in nearly every government office in the country. Dark burgundy velvet drapes hung from the ceiling in the double swing doorway between the two paintings.

It was almost 11 o'clock, and the 20 member cabinet (not one of them a woman) filed into the room. On the left sat Foreign Minister Agha Shahi, accompanied by the Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Agha Hilaly. To his left was Ali Ahmed Talpur, Minister of Defense. Also on the left hand side of the table was Sharifuddin Pirzada, Minister of Law and Parliamentary Affairs. Across the table, to the right of the President, sat K.M. Arif, Vice Chief of Army Staff. Behind them in one of the chairs surrounding the main table sat Major-General Rahim Khan, Secretary of Defense and PIA Chairman, who had been working night and day since the outbreak of the hijacking to try and resolve the crisis. It was these half dozen officials to whom President Zia-ul-Haq had delegated authority to monitor the crisis closely and take suitable actions. But what was suitable? On this, the President had said he needed to be consulted, so in reality there was no real delegation. This was Zia's style of leadership,

at least on these sensitive matters.

The other officials in the supporting row that encircled the main table were all government officers who were either familiar with, or directly working on, the crisis. Since the report of the killing of Tariq Rahim had been disseminated to the Cabinet and had been aired on the evening news the night before, deep dismay had set in among all assembled in the room, as elsewhere in the country.

On the stroke of 11 a.m. the President, General Mohammed Zia-ul-Haq, walked into the room. As he passed through the drapes, everyone jumped up and stood rigidly as a sign of respect. General Zia-ul-Haq was wearing his usual dark green army uniform, bedecked with the large array of medals that almost filled the left breast of the jacket. A scarlet sash hung over his right shoulder. The President was a stocky man with smooth, grayish-black hair and a well-groomed moustache. His entourage stepped quickly behind him and sat down on the half-dozen empty chairs. Not a sound could be heard during the customary moment of silence; the air felt heavier than usual. As each Minister stared down at the dark mahogany table, he could see his reflection in the shine of the tabletop. It was the job of two Pathan workers to apply the polish every day at six a.m. Spit and polish -- the same way that the helpers polished their generals' boots in the mornings.

As soon as everyone sat down, General Zia-ul-Haq turned to his defense minister for an update on events. The President's face was flushed with anger; the Minister's was also flushed, but it was accompanied by some nervousness, as Tariq Rahim was a Retired Major from the army, and it was particularly disturbing that a military man (even if he was retired) had been the first to be killed aboard the plane. The Minister was aware that Tariq Rahim had graduated from Sandhurst Military College and had chalked up a short but distinguished career working for various senior government officials, including Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, in the capacity as Aide-de-Campe (ADC) or military secretary to the Prime Minister.

Minister Talpur summarized the circumstances behind the Tariq Rahim slaying and said that this had been a wanton act of cold-blooded murder.

The Minister read out the announcement that would be conveyed to the press.

"President Zia-ul-Haq has expressed his deep sense of shock, grief and sorrow at the tragic death of Tariq Rahim, a Pakistani diplomat, who was shot dead by hijackers in Kabul yesterday. Tariq Rahim Shaheed was a brilliant young officer who fell victim to a wanton act of terrorism, which has been widely condemned the world over. He laid down his life in the service of his motherland and achieved martyrdom."

Several of the ministers suggested that more detailed information be released on the profile of Tariq Rahim and his distinguished family background. He was, after all, the Second Secretary in the Pakistan Embassy at Teheran, and was on his way to visit his father-in-law who had suffered a stroke in Peshawar. Tariq Rahim had been in Karachi attending the funeral of his own father, the late General Qazi A. Rahim and had thereafter boarded the Boeing plane on his way to Peshawar. General Qazi Rahim had served as Chairman of The Burma Shell Company, and as the Government's Commanding Officer (GOC) in East Pakistan in the 1950s. One speaker suggested that the official statement also mention that Tariq Rahim leaves behind a widow and a two year-old daughter.

After the Cabinet approved the last addition to the official statement, the President adjourned the meeting. He strode out as briskly as he had entered, his posture stiff and upright. He was in no mood to allow his government officials to make any compromises with the hijackers.

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Three days later, on Tuesday, March 10, the Pakistan Muslim Newspaper included the following item from staff reporter Anwar Iqbal:

PESHAWAR, March 9: Tariq Rahim, a Pakistani diplomat who was shot dead in Kabul last Friday on the hijacked PIA Boeing, had sent letters to his relatives asking them to save his life. This was disclosed here today by a woman passenger who arrived home by a PIA mercy plane after she was released by the hijackers.

The woman passenger, who refused to identify herself as she was afraid that the hijackers might harm her husband who was still in their custody, said Tariq Rahim was seated right behind her. He looked very worried as the hijackers had already informed him that his name was on top of the list of passengers whom they intended to shoot to press for their demands.

When it was announced that the hijackers were releasing the women and children, Tariq Rahim secretly gave her the letters--two were addressed to his uncle and aunt in Peshawar and the other two to his brother and sister. She delivered the first two letters personally in Peshawar and posted the remaining two letters. The woman passenger also disclosed that the hijackers had taken the passports of all the passengers, including the women. The released women passengers were told that their passports would be returned to them by the male passengers."

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On the same day -- March 10, 1981 in Washington -- Jim Theodores received a faxed copy of the Muslim Newspaper report. It corroborated exactly the account of the killing that had been supplied by Sjoed Boorsma, United Nations, New York. In the account, Boorsma cited verbatim a report that he had received from Bonev, UNDP Resident Representative in Kabul. Bonev had interviewed two American

women hostages at the United States Embassy in Kabul. Theodores became most alarmed by the turn in events, although he did not tell Gwynn the full details. He felt saddened by what had happened to Tariq Rahim, even though he never knew him. From what he had read of Rahim's distinguished background, he was struck by how tenuous a hold on life that any person had, even prominent figures. Theodores noticed from the articles in the Pakistani press that Tariq Rahim was thirty four years old -- the exact same age as me. Given Tariq Rahim's fate, Jim Theodores hoped that the similarity ended there.

Word Count: 1417

CHAPTER ELEVEN
BBC AND BIG BEN

A voice from the cockpit was our message to the outside world. Later, another voice came into the cockpit and echoed throughout the plane -- the familiar tones of BBC. As comforting as it was, the voice also presented new and unexpected risks for us.

Day Six: Saturday, March 6, Dawn, Kabul Runway

Excruciating cramps hit my legs. My muscles went into knots, forcing me to grip the seat. I tried to move my toes, one at a time, and stretch my legs, which had arched in pain. Straightening them was impossible as the person in front of me had a large bag under his seat. When Alamgir next came by, I asked him whether I could walk around to relieve my cramps. He refused, as I already had my walk today, the twenty yards to the cockpit and back. Also, I had been allowed two bathroom visits, he said, which was quite enough. I did not realize that Alamgir was keeping count of such things, that our daily necessities were being rationed to this extent. Life as a hostage meant the loss of some basic freedoms, more basic than one had ever imagined. I thought about a sea, about lapping blue water, and with the gentle motion of slowly twirling my toes, my cramps eventually went away.

The feeling of claustrophobia became acute. I was dying to run on a road somewhere, to swim in a pool, or just see the sky without looking through a plexiglass double-window. My body cried out for physical exercise and my mind wanted immediate relief from this situation. If I never saw the inside of another plane in my life, I would have been happy.

How unusual that felt for me, a person who was captivated by planes and who loved to fly. I longed most of all to see Gwynn, to savor her beauty, and to hug her energetic body. The days were unfolding slowly in this confined space of one hundred feet in length and fourteen feet in width.

As a release, my mind kept on returning to sports. I was transferring my burning desire to be out of this airplane, to be free and running around, to a desire to play or watch sports games instead. I longed to see those Washington Redskins, the Orioles, and my favorite team: the miracle New York

Mets. I had planned to drive up to Baltimore to see the Orioles' first home game of the season, which was only a few weeks away in April; all this was before my life had been turned upside down by Alamgir. Short-stop Cal Ripken, Jr., was the star I loved to watch most, making those spectacular diving catches on the Oriole Park's green turf. Oh, how I wished that I could dive out of the front door of the plane.

I wanted run faster than an outfielder, perhaps like a track star, so that I could get away from the plane, across the runway and the adjacent grass airstrip before the Afghan and Soviet soldiers would shoot me. I had loved to watch track and was disappointed when Jimmy Carter pulled the U.S. team out of the 1980 Summer Olympic Games in Moscow in retaliation for the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. A strange retaliation: sports for politics by a country which had always said that politics should be kept out of sports. I guess it all depended upon whose politics one was talking about.

I felt sorry for Mary Decker who never got a chance to win the 1500 meters when she was in her prime because of that Olympics boycott; and for Zola Budd the South African middle-distance runner who was just coming into international prominence as a middle-distance runner at the time; Zola was considered good enough to have a chance of beating Mary Decker at the time. When I had watched television clips on the Moscow Olympics being played side-by-side with flashbacks of the of the Soviet Union's troops invading Afghanistan, little did I realize that I would see some of those same troops firsthand, encircling our aircraft. History does some strange things.

While I was thinking about the Moscow Olympics and the loss of medals by U.S. sports stars, I was struck by how one simply could not compare this to the loss of lives, not even the loss of one life in the Afghanistan war, or any war for that matter. Yet the U.S. media characterized Jimmy Carter's boycott as a difficult decision, as though one could compare the loss of a chance to win an athletic medal with the loss of a life. As I thought about these global matters to take my mind off the immediate danger around me, it was fascinating to be watching the comings and goings of Soviet military personnel and

equipment outside my window. The movement was such a contrast to the inertia inside the plane.

I wondered which sports besides cricket and squash my fellow passengers played. Sports was the great common denominator, the activity that brought diverse people of different cultures and nationalities to one venue to compete against each other, that allowed strangers to engage in warm conversations about a cricket score, or a soccer goal. I used to talk about soccer with Wolfgang Siebeck in Islamabad; what would he be doing now?

Claustrophobia! Rather than be cooped up in this plane, I wanted most of all to be swimming underwater. Swimming had given me that wonderful sensation of being able to float carefree, suspended in cool water, in a state of meditation. I yearned also for the sound of feet -- my feet -- pounding rhythmically on a jogging lane. Would I ever be able to engage in those simple pleasures again? I touched my brow -- my greasy hair. It itched, oh how it itched, as though I had lice. I longed to rub white shampoo suds into my hair, just as I would back home on Saturday mornings in a shower stall at Georgetown University after a hard squash game.

Squash, the game that is dominated by Pakistani champions. I wondered whether Alamgir played squash -- he certainly looked athletic enough. I wanted to run down the aisle and smash a squash ball into Ali Butt's face, maybe even Nasir Jamal's. It would not quite equal the force of their grenades, but it would give me pleasure all of the same. And what about Alamgir's face? Did I wish to do the same to him? Strangely not, as he was different; something about him intrigued me. Was I succumbing to the Stockholm Syndrome? I didn't know the answer; nor did I care.

As my body cried out to be rid of this plane, my system ached for some form of contact with the outside world. The plane was beginning to show signs of stress. Water dripped down from the ceiling, yet Engineer Nadir had assured me the day before that this was merely due to condensation from the air conditioning system, which had been started up for the first time in four days. The whirring of the generator machine outside was like music to my ears at the time. Apparently, Alamgir had finally

convinced the Kabul airport authorities to send proper-functioning generators to our plane. We had endured four days of sweltering heat and four nights of bone-chilling cold.

As soon as the generators were hooked up to the wings of the plane, the air began to flow smoothly. Thus, the problem of sharp fluctuations in temperature was taken care of, for the time being. Also, with the less crowded conditions aboard the plane, body heat was less of an issue. I would not have thought that the release of thirty-one people (18 women originally, 9 children, 2 sick men, and two more women of late) would have made such a difference.

The businessman seated in the front on my right was tapping his fingers on the fold-down table in front of his seat. The beat sounded like a thabala (Indian drums) and I imagined the sounds of an accompanying sitar. Thabalas and sitars -- the perfect match. This musical entourage had performed at the Bombay Taj Mahal Hotel the last time I'd stayed there and with luck I would hear that group again if I managed to get to Bombay next week after this ordeal. Why was I thinking about Indian music and Bombay at all? Perhaps it was because I had always found Indian music to have a certain throb, to want to lift me away, far away from this plane. As I strained my ears to listen to the rhythmic sounds that I could faintly hear echoing off the mans headphones, I also began to drum with my fingers on the seat table in front of me. However, I did this more because my fingers were beginning to itch and lose their normal sensation on account of having to sit cramped for hours on end, than because I was in any musical mood.

My claustrophobia was driven by having to stare at the walls around me, and worse still, by having to live surrounded by these walls and little else. One of the most difficult things for me to deal with was body odor -- my odor and that of others around me. My shirt now felt like crumpled parchment. Perhaps because Engineer Nadir was used to having to spend time in cramped aircraft cockpits, he had brought along a small bottle of 4711 (the real thing, not a cheap imitation like Alamgir used). He had given me some to dab on. But sweet as it smelled, it didn't really mask my underlying body odor. Nadir

did not seem as bothered by these physical discomforts, as I did. Perhaps PIA's training was superior to my army training, which in any case had been spoiled by too many years of the good corporate life in Washington. I no longer knew how to rough it. Years ago, I could have existed in a sand dune in the Kalahari desert for weeks if I had to. Now I craved fresh food and natural drinks. On this plane, our breakfasts had consisted of dry toast and canned juice; still it was satisfying enough, as there were more important things to worry about. Fortunately, the cigarette smokers in the plane had run out of supplies by now, so there was little smoke in the air anymore. Having to go "cold turkey" on their nicotine addiction must have been bothering them more than was the lack of fresh juices for me.

I felt desperate to get out of the plane, so I began to mull over an escape plan in my mind. First, I would need a fellow jailbreaker. Fred Hubbell looked like the best choice, being calm and rational, but he was seated far away. Craig Clymore, who was seated in Row 10 at this point, became my backup choice. I needed to formulate a plan and slip a note to either Hubbell or Clymore at the first opportunity. My plan called for one of these passengers to distract the hijackers in the rear, while I would try to do the same up front. Then, hopefully, one of us would try to overpower one of the hijackers and seize his pistol. I thought that I would wait until the breakfast food was being taken away, as there would still be commotion on board and the aisle would be congested with ground workers and trays. That way the hijackers might not be able to get a shot off before we had time to seize a gun.

I discussed my plan briefly with Engineer Nadir.

"Too dangerous," he said. "Sit still, wait for your chance later."

A little later, as I was walking to the bathroom, Alamgir stopped in his tracks behind me and turned to one of the migrant workers. The man looked terrified.

"Acha, that one, give to me, I want it!" Alamgir demanded, pointing to the large radio that lay perched in the overhead compartment above the man's seat. He was one of the Gulf workers I had seen in the departure hall. At that time, he was carrying a television, radio, and large blanket with him.

Presumably, the TV set had been loaded into the hold and the radio came on board. Alamgir reached over and grabbed the radio. The passenger looked distraught, his prized possession was being taken away from him. He grabbed the handle to hold on to it; and got clubbed with a pistol in return. The stunned man slumped back in his seat. Alamgir walked off towards the cockpit, radio in hand. The man's worldly possession, his ear to the world, had been confiscated.

Naila Raza came over to calm the distraught passenger. She said something to him in Urdu that appeared to settle the passenger down -- at least he smiled -- and she returned to her seat.

Soon we were greeted by the familiar sounds of Big Ben chiming the hour and the welcome tones of the morning announcer on the British Broadcasting Service's morning news. His voice filled the whole plane as it came through the plane's intercom. The announcer, speaking in his clipped Oxbridge accent, said:

"This is London. It is 7:00 a.m. Greenwich mean time. Here is the news. In Kabul, Afghanistan, the hijacking of a Pakistani airliner has moved into its sixth day. Details remain sketchy about who the hijackers are and what are their conditions. From what has been pieced together, the hijackers, believed to be three in number, have demanded that the Pakistani government release a number of prisoners from Pakistan jails. The exact number has not been disclosed.

Our correspondent in Kabul reports that the Red Cross has confirmed that one hundred and ten passengers and a crew of ten remain on board. Earlier in the week, the hijackers released women, children, and two sick men. One of those released told our correspondent in Kabul that conditions aboard the plane were very tense and deteriorating. Meanwhile, the Pakistani Government has reportedly rounded up hundreds of supporters of former Premier Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, including his wife Begum Nusrat Bhutto and his daughter Benazir Bhutto. They are being kept under detention in Rawalpindi. The British Government has sent a message to President Zia ul-Haq expressing concern at this development and urging that restraint be adopted. Of the five Western hostages, three are believed to be from the United

States and one from Sweden. The BBC is not informed about the nationality of the fifth hostage. A report from Kabul indicated that he may be British, but the Foreign Office has said that to the best of its knowledge there was no British national on board.

A United Nations spokesman in New York announced that Kurt Waldheim called President Zia-ul-Haq to express his concern for a safe resolution of the crisis."

There was a pause. The announcer continued: "This just in from Pakistan: the freed women and children have arrived in Peshawar and are reported to be in good health. As soon as we obtain more information, we will update this story."

The announcer continued with a local British story, but I was unable to absorb it, still thinking about what he had said about a British person being on board but the Foreign Office being unable to confirm it. Alamgir must have heard that section of the report as well and he would realize that I had lied to him. Can't the press exercise some restraint? Revealing too many of the facts and counter-assertions could prove to be dangerous for me as Alamgir had heard that same BBC broadcast as well. He would now be able to detect my duplicity, and see the cover that I had adopted to protect my double jeopardy. Would he think that I was a double agent after all?

Static soon interrupted the radio broadcast. After the static cleared, a clear voice, speaking in Urdu, referred to PK326 but I understood little else. I assumed that the report covered the same material as the BBC, perhaps with a slightly different interpretation. The transmission then switched back to BBC where the game "My Word" was in progress. The moderator was displaying the best of British humor. It calmed me for a short while.

Sometime later, Alamgir came down the aisle. I thought he was about to accost me. The blood rushed to my temples. However, to my surprise, he continued down the aisle, without even looking at me. I guessed that he was preoccupied about the reference to "details remain sketchy about the hijackers' conditions." Sketchy! It was a favorite word with the BBC news service. I too could not fathom whether

it meant that the negotiators had not taken note of Alamgir's insistence that the government must release ninety-two political prisoners before we could be freed, or did it mean that the negotiators had heard this condition but were keeping it secret in order to minimize the political impact on public opinion in Pakistan? In other incidents, crisis managers have often shaded the truth until it became clear as to which way events would turn. It would have been reasonable for the Pakistani negotiating team to have done the same.

Engineer Nadir said that after my radio transmission was completed and I was back in my seat, Alamgir spent most of the morning sending other messages to the control towers in both Kabul and Karachi. Apparently, he even tried to reach the control tower in Teheran, but with no success. I had not realized that an aircraft's two-way radio, particularly this old one, had such a long range. Alamgir was becoming more frustrated it seemed, as he was getting nowhere with Pakistan's negotiators. From time to time, he would emerge from the cockpit cursing loudly in English; interspersed were Urdu words, which I assumed contained similar foul language.

The magical BBC voice had put me in touch with the outside world. It had rescued me from this plane, in a sense. I no longer felt so isolated. The voice was like music to my commonwealth ears; it contained that hypnotic quality of understated humor, contrasted by low key seriousness. I wished that Alamgir would leave the radio on all day, but no such luck. My mind went back to John Cheever's short story of an enormous radio in a New York apartment that could eavesdrop on other apartments in the building. I wished that the radio in the cockpit could eavesdrop on my house in Washington; then I would know what Gwynn was doing at any moment.

However, the introduction of a radio into the equation had also complicated matters: Alamgir was now aware of everything that was being said on the international airwaves. There could be no secrets anymore, no doubletalk and duplicity from one government to the next. The hijackers would now be able to see through any bluffs or verify adverse developments (for example, the detention of Benazir Bhutto

and her mother, Nusrat Bhutto that week) as they had several sources from which to try and verify the news -- BBC, VOA, Radio Moscow, and the French radio station. All of these transmissions were now carrying regular updates on our incident; it was no longer the sole domain of Radio Pakistan.

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But some of the broadcasts were also ominous. Later that evening we heard the following item on BBC:

"This is London. It is six p.m. Greenwich mean time. The Pakistan hijacking has moved into an ominous stage. Unconfirmed reports indicate that one of the hostages was killed in Kabul and his body was taken off the aircraft. His identity has not been released, although our correspondent in Islamabad reports that the Pakistani government is making arrangements to send an aircraft to Kabul to pick up the body. This would indicate that he is not one of the foreign nationals. Embassy representatives are on the scene in Kabul and all indications are that the foreign nationals trapped aboard the plane have not been harmed. We hope to have more information by the time of the 7:00 a.m. news."

CHAPTER TWELVE
ALLEGATIONS AGAINST MURTAZA BHUTTO

Day Seven, Sunday, March 8, 1981, 8:00 a.m., Islamabad

On both television and the state radio, the Government of Pakistan unveiled a startling allegation: that the mastermind behind the hijacking was none other than the former Prime Minister's son, Murtaza Bhutto. The exact contents of the Government's official statement were reprinted in the *Pakistan Morning News* the next day:

QUOTE: According to information received from our Embassy in Kabul, Mr. Tariq Rahim, one of the passengers on the hijacked PIA aircraft has been killed by the hijackers. This cold blooded murder has been allowed to take place by the Kabul authorities in total disregard to their international obligations and the norms of civilized conduct.

It will be recalled that after the release of women and children yesterday, the Pakistan negotiating team in Kabul has continued its efforts to establish face to face contact with the hijackers but has been denied this facility by the Kabul authorities. The only two contacts during the last 24 hours with the hijackers have been through the wireless of the Kabul airport control tower.

Not only has our negotiating team not been provided any assistance, but its work has actually been impeded in a planned and systematic manner. The special PIA aircraft, which went to pick up the released women and children, was first turned back and allowed to land in Kabul only after the released passengers had been detained there for another day. They were not allowed any contact with the Pakistan Embassy.

Since the very beginning of this tragedy, the Government of Pakistan has spared no effort to secure the release and safe return of the passengers and crew of the hijacked PIA aircraft. Apart from making urgent appeals to Afghan authorities both in Kabul and Islamabad, a massive diplomatic effort was launched with governments which have representation in Kabul. An appeal was made to the

International Civil Aviation Organization, which has asked the Kabul authorities to ensure the release and safety of the passengers and the crew.

The Pakistan Government has remained in touch with friendly governments on this matter on a continuous basis. These include the neighboring countries, the great powers and other who have influence in Kabul.

Even though our negotiating team was denied face to fact contact with the hijackers, all efforts were made and continue to be made to find out the exact nature of the hijacker's demands. These demands have been deliberately kept vague.

In order to secure the release of passengers and crew the first demand of the hijackers that their claim of not being members of the defunct PPP be broadcast, was conceded despite evidence available with the Government to the contrary. Their second demand was that Pakistan radio should not broadcast anything which would harm their image. In order to ensure the safety of passengers and crew, even this was agreed provided the hijackers for their part agreed to release the hostages. Yet another demand put forward by them concerned the release of unspecified persons (probably 5) taken into custody following the killing of a student in Karachi University on February 26, 1981. The Government wanted the hijackers to identify the persons whose release was specifically demanded by them. Their fourth demand pertained to the release of 92 persons reported to be in custody for criminal and subversive activities. This figure has been fluctuating between 69 and 93. The list includes a number of names which could not be identified unless their addresses or domicile were also given. While clarifications were being sought from the hijackers, it was made clear to them that the Government was prepared to look into the cases where the charges were not of a serious criminal nature.

During the course of wireless contacts, the leader of the hijackers has gleefully claimed that his group was responsible for the bomb explosion in Karachi stadium during the Pope's visit to Pakistan on February 16, 1981. He has also claimed responsibility for the explosion in a high court building on

January 5, 1981. He has publicly claimed that Murtaza Bhutto is the Secretary General of his terrorist group. All this has been duly recorded. It has also been confirmed that the leader of the hijackers had a meeting at the Kabul airport immediately after the arrival of the hijacked plane with Murtaza Bhutto.

The Government of Pakistan has made it clear to the Kabul authorities that it holds them responsible for the safety and release of the persons on board the aircraft and for the aircraft itself.

The Kabul authorities have regrettably shown no inclination to discharge this responsibility. Indeed, there is ample evidence that they have colluded with the hijackers. They are pressing the Government of Pakistan constantly to surrender to the black-mail of the hijackers. This open encouragement of an international crime is unprecedented.

Under the circumstances, the Pakistan Government holds the Kabul authorities wholly responsible for the developments so far, including the death of Mr. Tariq Rahim a Pakistan Government official, and demands that they fulfill their elementary international responsibilities for the protection of the persons aboard the aircraft both Pakistanis and nationals of the other countries. It also appeals to all states and organizations which are opposed to terrorism to exert utmost pressure in Kabul to secure the release of the passengers, crew and aircraft.

The Government of Pakistan's offer to send a rescue mission to Kabul was conveyed two days ago to the Kabul authorities. There has been no response from them, nor have they taken any steps themselves, even though they have free access to the aircraft and have been providing full news media facilities for publicity and propaganda to the hijackers.

The Pakistan Government is approaching the UN and the International Red Cross for assistance.

END QUOTE

Wolfgang Siebeck, who had just tuned into the eight o'clock evening news, heard the new allegations. He was shocked. The part about Murtaza Bhutto came as a complete surprise. From what

he knew of the Bhutto family, he realized that they were deeply grieved by what had happened to their father -- anyone would be. But hijacking an aircraft -- that was another matter entirely. He became more worried. This does not look like an amateurish operation, he thought.

The T.V. announcer flipped to a funeral scene in Peshawar -- it was the body of Tariq Rahim being brought back for burial. A special PIA plane had been dispatched to Kabul in the morning to pick up the body and return immediately. The same plane carried the Pakistani negotiating team who had tried to gain access to a direct radio communication with the hijackers but the Afghan authorities had not allowed them to enter the Control Tower. The complicity of the Afghan authorities did not surprise Siebeck at all. Jim Theodores had briefed him plenty about the mystifying things that went on in Kabul. Siebeck was pleased that his duty station was Islamabad -- at least the authorities were level-headed and played fair. They were also frank.

Siebeck called the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and complimented the officials on the tough language used in the official statement that had been released to the media.

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Sunday, March 8, 1981, 12:00 p.m., Mclean, Virginia

Jim Theodores walked across the front hallway of his house to check his phone messages: nothing there. Friday had been a key turning point in the crisis with the killing of Tariq Rahim. It was as though the telex machine was in constant motion; now it was downtime -- the weekend. Washington was quiet and Rawalpindi was even quieter, except for those who were manning the operations control room in the makeshift crisis center. Being nearly noon on Sunday, Jim Theodores had just returned from attending morning services at the nearby Greek Orthodox Church, where he had prayed that the slaying of Tariq Rahim would be the only one to occur on board the PIA plane. But he could not be sure of this and that scared him.

Theodores had not received any communication from the World Bank office in Islamabad for nearly twenty-four hours and he feared that the negotiations between the Pakistan Government and the hijackers were becoming bogged down. Were the hijackers getting the upper hand, now that they had killed a prominent Pakistani diplomat? Or had the Pakistan Government's resolve become so hardened by this turn of events that what little chance may have previously existed for arriving at a compromise solution had effectively been shattered?

Theodores knew little about the origins of the hijackers other than what he had read in the Press reports, as well as in the telexes that had streamed into his office during the second day of the hijacking. He did not know, for example, whether Alamgir (or Sallamullah Khan Tippu as the foreign Press liked to refer to him, or in the New York Times' formal tone: "Mr. Khan Tippu") was operating alone or was he in cahoots with a larger group that was lying in wait in Kabul. If so, did such a group plan to link-up with the three hijackers (as the Ammal Group did with the TWA hijackers in Beirut in June 1985)? When would the hidden card be revealed?

During the last few months of 1980, as Jim Theodores was preparing to close the Bank's office in Afghanistan and vacate his Kabul home, he had been exposed to enough loose talk at dinner parties about suspected spies and alleged drug smugglers to fill the manual of any would-be spook. Stories abounded about particular lucrative routes for the drug trade (through the Khyber Pass, processing in Peshawar and sea shipments from Karachi to Europe) and gun-running (the flow of merchandise would run in the opposite direction from the illicit dealers in the United States and Europe to the gun importers in Pakistan for eventual shipment to the Mujahaddin guerrillas). Theodores would also pick-up comments regarding progress on the Afghanistan warfront. These were the topics that were washed down with the help of whiskey and gin at the Kabul cocktail-dinner circuit in those days.

There was ample evidence that the first year of the Soviet Union's incursion into Afghanistan had not gone well for the Soviet forces. While the futility of the war had not yet become clear, initial signs were pointing to a long siege by the occupying troops. Jim Theodores was well aware of this in what turned out

Theodores stopped to ask himself what was so interesting about the multiple incident -- and then it all clicked for him. The two Palestinians who had hijacked the PAN AM plane from Amsterdam did so only because they didn't make it onto the El Al plane to join Khaled and Arguello from the outset. The original plan called for four hijackers on the El Al plane, not two, and for no Boeing 747 to be hijacked on that day. The two who missed the El Al flight (the plane was oversold) were not trained on Boeing 747s and that flustered them; yet they made it to Cairo, and flew the PAN AM 747 themselves for part of the way. Arguello was not so lucky on the EL AL 707; he didn't count on air marshals being on board, a practice that is a matter of course for El Al now.

Theodores wondered whether there were any such marshals on board the PIA plane. And if so, why hadn't he been informed about this in all of the cable traffic that had passed between Washington and Islamabad and between Washington and New York? Also, if two hijackers had proven to be too few to take over the EL AL plane, were three sufficient for the PIA plane? Did that give Alamgir and his accomplices enough firepower, especially if there were no armed marshals aboard the PIA plane, as he suspected was the case? Theodores grappled with these questions as he swung his car down Pennsylvania Avenue towards Eighteenth Street.

He was barely concentrating on the road ahead of him, which luckily for him was empty on this Sunday (the cherry blossom parade was still several weeks away). How vivid these images of hijacked planes were for Theodores, after all of these years. Eleven years that had seen the heyday of hijackings, with the Entebbe hijacking of 1976 when the Israelis launched their daring elite commando raid being the incident he remembered best. And all he had done was to read press accounts of incidents like Entebbe, Dawson's Field, Cairo, Amsterdam, Rome, etc. Now that he was involved in monitoring an actual situation, he realized how chilling the incidents really were. This was not the stuff of abstract names -- people who were strangers, airports that were remote or unvisited, and aircraft with which he was unfamiliar. No, it was Kabul, his temporary home for five years; it was a Boeing 720B, the type of aircraft that he had travelled on many times;

and it was PIA, an airline that he knew nearly as well as he knew ARIANA for he had passed through Pakistan many times. He almost felt as if he were inside that green and white PIA plane, and he shuddered.

More importantly, the hostage whom Theodores was charged to monitor was no longer a stranger to him. He was a Bank person, a member of his corporate family, and the spouse of someone he had grown to like immensely. Images of Leila Khaled were quickly replaced by images of Gwynn Davies, as he guided his car through the entrance of the Bank garage. It would soon be time to call Gwynn again.

Theodores had long been interested in espionage stories and incidents of terrorism. Yet, he was constantly amazed at how short was the world's memory. Entebbe, Fiumicino Airport in Rome, Athens airport, Lod airport in Tel Aviv -- these were some of the infamous settings for hijackings and airport terminal shootouts that had occurred in the past. But how many people remember those incidents, he wondered? And now Kabul! Romantic-sounding Kabul -- how ironic. Would it take this new incident -- the hijack of PK326 - - to bring such incidents back to the world's attention again?

Theodores pulled his car into the empty garage at the World Bank and hurried upstairs. All of the staff who had helped him during the week were now at home and he was alone in the Bank's crisis center, his make-shift office. Jim stared hard at the silent telex machine as though sheer will alone could make it operate. The machine was quite different from a typewriter. It had an obstinate personality: it would only sputter into action when someone else was transmitting a message. "Start, my little friend." Then he got angrier: "move you lousy machine." He was frustrated, and kicked the telex stand. Suddenly, the carriage burst into action. The obstinate machine was becoming the bearer of tidings. Good or bad tidings, he could not yet know. Click, click, click... Jim looked at the top of the page. The words: "Page 1 of 4 , Kabul ... Tariq Rahim has been killed ...the Kabul authorities ..." flashed by. But the machine's carriage was moving so fast that he couldn't read the message easily, so he curbed his impatience and waited until the four-page telex was completely received. Meanwhile, he walked to the phone and called Martijn Paijmans.

"Martijn, it looks like something important is coming in from Islamabad. I'll call you in a few minutes once I've read the contents."

The telex machine stopped clicking and Theodores pulled out the three-foot long sheet out from the back of the machine, and gave the carriage a little pat. "Thanks, my friend, let's hope that you are my friend today." He sat down and started reading. Halfway through the telex he let out a loud shout to the empty room.

"Good, god, it's Murtaza Bhutto who appears to be the person behind this hijacking. I would never have believed it, not with his upbringing, Oxford University and all that...."

Theodores called Paijmans: "Martijn, the Government is alleging that the person behind the hijacking is Ali Bhutto's son, Murtaza Bhutto. The Government has apparently confirmed that Murtaza Bhutto came to the back of the plane and met with the hijackers. Furthermore, the Government charges that Murtaza Bhutto is Secretary-General of the Al-Zulfikar Organization, which in their view is a terrorist organization. As head of the AZO, Bhutto is being pinned with masterminding or being responsible for several incidents, including the bombing of Karachi stadium in February during a visit by the Pope."

Paijmans agreed with Theodores that the situation had become alarming, especially with this allegation about Murtaza Bhutto and the BBC report that the Pakistan Government had rounded up hundreds of Pakistan Peoples Party supporters, including Begum Nusrat Bhutto and Benazir Bhutto. Paijmans asked where the Bhutto women were being detained.

"In Karachi, I believe, as they were at their house in Clifton at the time," Theodores replied.

Paijmans asked to be kept posted all day if need be and hung up. Theodores became even more downcast. He realized that if Alamgir was listening to these broadcasts on board the aircraft -- as he claimed to be doing -- then nobody could predict how he might react to this new piece of adverse news. The arrest of the Bhutto supporters had to be interpreted as adverse from Alamgir's perspective, or that of the alleged head of his organization -- Murtaza Bhutto.

Jim called Gwynn to check up on how she was faring. He made no mention of the allegation concerning Murtaza Bhutto. There is no need to worry her anymore than is necessary, he thought.

"What's up Gwynn? What are you doing?"

"Not much of anything. I've just returned from attending Quaker Meeting. The Indonesians have left town and I'm finishing up some loose ends. I try not to think about the Rahim killing, but it's hopeless. Even the evening news on National Public Radio carried an item on that slaying. I can't get away from constant reminders. Maybe I should just shut off all contacts except for calls from you Jim."

"Not a bad idea.... try it until at least tomorrow, when a new week starts."

"A new week!" Gwynn exclaimed ... "We are starting to talk in weeks, not days. This whole thing is unbelievable, Jim. It still feels so unreal -- like an enduring, bad nightmare."

Jim Theodores ran his fingers through his shiny, gray hair. He looked in the mirror and was stunned to see how much he had grayed in just the last week. He vowed to bill me for that shock of new gray hair, should he be so lucky as to get a chance to send me a bill. A pinch-full of luck and a dose of good planning - the two ingredients to cook this Afghanistan stew, he mused.

On balance, Jim felt hopeful, and as was his usual demeanor, humorous, though this was not exactly the situation to indulge in light-hearted banter. He would have to engage in that with himself for now and save the humorous telexes, for which he was legend, to sometime later. Insh' Allah, he thought.

Jim put his papers into his briefcase and departed the building. The bicyclists were now clogging the bike path along the canal, adjacent to the Potomac River; casual strollers stepped out of the cyclists' way as they whooshed by. He had been told that I liked to ride my bicycle along the Potomac Canal on Sunday mornings.

By this time it was night aboard the PIA plane. Jim wondered what it must be like to sit in a dark, cold plane for a week, deprived of one's normal routine. Would it be the claustrophobia that would get to one, finally driving the person crazy, or would it be the tension of the standoff? Jim could only wonder ...

CHAPTER THIRTEEN
FAREWELL AFGHANISTAN

SEVENTH NIGHT: March 8, 1981, 6:00 pm., Kabul Runway

A nudge at my elbow brought me out of my sleep -- it was Alamgir again. I had last remembered looking at my watch at 5:00 p.m. After an uneventful day, I had finally drifted off to sleep as sundown approached.

"Someone wants you on the radio," Alamgir said.

"Who is it? I already talked for you on Friday to Karachi."

"Someone in Kabul Control Tower wants to speak with you. Come, come!"

My hopes soared. Was a break in the impasse at hand at last? I followed Alamgir. This time he made me sit in the copilot's seat on the right, as Younus was resting in one of the passenger seats in the front; Alamgir took the pilot's seat. This time he dispensed with the foreplay -- the grenade and pistol routine and handed me the microphone.

An English voice came over the radio. "Hello PK326, this is Christopher Runnell, Deputy Resident Representative of the United Nations Development Program, the UNDP's Kabul office." His voice was matter-of-fact.

Runnell continued: "Mr. Bonev, our Resident Representative, is out of town. I would like to ask you a few questions. How are things inside the plane?"

Somewhat incredulously, I answered his question with an equally matter-of-fact statement: "We need the toilets cleaned. It's cold at times." As I talked, I looked straight ahead at the uninterrupted view afforded by the nose of the cockpit. The contrast of the wide, empty tarmac to the severe claustrophobia I felt inside the cockpit made me lose my patience at that moment. I blurted out: "It's goddam freezing at night here. Why can't we get reliable heat into the plane? What is happening on the set of conditions listed in my message of Friday. You might know about that message, Mr. Runnell, the one I had to relay

to the Karachi airport authorities?"

Runnell responded: "I'll pass your request about more heat onto the authorities. On the other question, I cannot comment anything. The U.N. is not involved in any aspect of the discussions. It is entirely up to the Government of Pakistan. Please tell me, how are the passengers?"

It was a reasonable question, but not one to which I could respond directly. Yet Alamgir seemed distracted at that moment by some movement of jeeps on the tarmac, so I took my opportunity to be as candid as possible: "Mr. Runnell, I assume that you know about the developments here. Most of the passengers seem okay, although two men were taken off the plane other day. One appeared to be suffering from convulsions, while the other was complaining of chest pains."

"I am aware of this, Mr. Balkind. I understand that all of the women and children are off the plane. Is that correct?"

Now I was amazed. How could he not know that two American women and one Pakistani woman were still on board? After all, the U.N. office would have had access to the full passenger list, the one prepared by the Red Cross and Alamgir that listed the various nationalities of the hostages. Surely, it was reasonable to assume that the Red Cross would have supplied the list to the U.N. It should have been a straight-forward matter to check off the names of the released passengers versus those who were forced to remain on board.

I masked my surprise and said: "Not really, Mr. Runnell, there are two American women and one elderly Pakistani women on board still."

Alamgir looked furious. He pulled in his brows sharply. Drumming his fingers on the flight wheel, he barked: "Answer only what you are asked and nothing more!"

I knew I had taken a chance by revealing this information, but I did not consider it to be serious in the big scheme of things? Could I not at least have taken a small risk to try and help someone whom I had talked to at the airport (Charlotte Hubbell) and someone else (Debbie Weisner) whom I had

not talked to but who appeared to be like anyone else on the plane -- an innocent victim trapped in a broader confrontation. I prayed that my imprudent action in disclosing this information would not have serious consequences for me.

Alamgir calmed down. Another crisis had passed, at least for the meantime.

Runnell continued to speak without appearing to pick up on my reference to the women -- perhaps that was his tactic, to not draw attention to the information that I had passed onto him.

"Mr. Balkind, what else do you need?"

I would like to send a message to my family."

"I'm sorry, but that can't be done," Runnell said.

I felt dejected. I so badly wanted to talk with Gwynn and if I could not do so, to at least be able to send her a message.

I tried to elicit more information out of the U.N. official.

"Mr. Runnell, do you have any idea as to when we might be released? What was the Pakistani government's response to the message that I had to make on Friday." Again a reference to "had to make", as I was still feeling defensive about my forced role.

Runnell replied: "I don't know. The Pakistani government is doing its best to work out a solution. Even Mr. Waldheim has sent a message to the Pakistani government urging restraint. I need to go now."

"Roger," I said, my voice filled with resignation as my contact to the outside world was about to disappear from the air.

Runnell signed off. I handed Alamgir the headset, and he escorted me back to my seat.

My anger had not subsided. How could the authorities not have realized that there were still two American women on board our plane? Alamgir and the Red Cross had compiled a list of all passengers. Surely, Runnell had access to that list, or was the U.N. office being kept in the dark by the Afghan authorities? I had no answers to my questions and the more I queried these matters, the more agitated I

became.

Alamgir went back to the cockpit, picked up the microphone and spoke to someone who I assumed was in the Kabul Control Tower. It sounded as though Alamgir was giving instructions. After he stopped talking and the crackling of the radio had ceased, it was still difficult for me to try and concentrate on things around me. My head felt clogged up with the weeks happenings and my body felt exhausted.

I tried to recall the sequence of the stretcher laden with a sick man being brought on board. When I had spoken to Runnell moments earlier, I had referred to an epileptic man being carried off on a stretcher at Kabul airport. The stretcher, the stretcher.....bingo it hit me. In Karachi a man came on in a stretcher. After three days, when the women and children were released, that same man walked off the plane, the only man to do so. For some reason, I hadn't put two and two together before. Now that I had sat in the cockpit for more than an hour with Alamgir's weapons at close range, and later had referred to a stretcher in my conversation with Runnell, the whole thing fell into place: all of the weapons and the dynamite had been hidden under the blankets of the stretcher at Karachi airport. How brazen of the hijackers! I found it hard to believe that the Karachi airport authorities could not even noticed this? So, the hijacking appeared to have been an inside job.

At the time, I had noticed that the men carrying the "patient" on the stretcher were not paramedics, but porters, and they had avoided passing through the metal detector section. My alarm bells had not gone off in Karachi, but now they were ringing loudly. I was disgusted, and felt cheated. I had taken this flight in good trust and it had been hijacked with enough arms on board to fight a small war, or so it seemed. I resolved that in future I would be much more circumspect of the persons around me and would not be so trusting.

When the next radio broadcast came over the intercom, the announcer was already in the midst of the particular news item. The English accent did not sound Oxbridge this time. The speaker was saying

"the hijacking of the Pakistan jet aircraft continues. The Soviet Union is doing all it can to secure the release of all the hostages and medical supplies and food are being supplied regularly to the aircraft. The authorities in combination with officials from the Government of Afghanistan are doing all they can to bring this ordeal to an end..."

What a joke, I thought. Apparently, Alamgir had not realized that on most of the meter bands, the Soviet Union would beam in on frequencies that were so close to BBC that the untrained listener could not tell the difference. The lengths that the Soviet propaganda machine would go to, employing announcers who had undergone special tutoring in how to sound British. And a little gullible it was, because most listeners could tell the difference between Radio Moscow and the BBC in the first few sentences of a broadcast.

Doing all they can indeed! We hadn't seen a Soviet officer since the very first hour after our arrival in Kabul. The Soviets and the Afghan authorities had been totally absent from the scene. If it wasn't callous, it was downright neglectful.

I returned to my book and started to read it again, thinking that this being Sunday, a day of leisure normally, I might be able to absorb more of it this time. An hour later, an American accent came over the intercom. "This is VOA, the Voice of America, Asian Service. Today we have for you *All Things Considered* and the *Saturday Evening Concert Hour*."

So Saturday evening public radio in the United States was coming to rescue me out my gloom this Sunday morning on the plane. The announcer first read out the weather: "it is 40 degrees in Washington ..." I never heard the rest as the word Washington made me cry -- I wanted to see Gwynn so desperately.

I pulled myself together and listened as the VOA announcer droned on. Those VOA announcers would almost put me to sleep with the slow pace of their reading. This was done, I gathered, to try impart some knowledge of the English language to their foreign listeners. BBC, on the other hand, was

different; it consisted of straight news and discussion programs with little pretense of trying to teach English to far away listeners as part of the particular program. Consequently, the BBC announcers would speak in concise phrases, with a smooth, quick delivery, in the best of Oxbridge accents.

The VOA announcer's voice started to drift out. Soon, Radio Pakistan in Urdu came over the intercom. Its version of events was presumably quite different to the Russian one, and would have been similar to the BBC one, only with more detail. The voice of the Pakistan announcer also started to fade out. At that moment, Alamgir emerged from the cockpit carrying the large short-wave radio. He looked frustrated as he strained to hear what Radio Pakistan was saying.

I decided that this was my opportunity to try and get Alamgir back into Alamgir's good books, as I had nearly blown it in my earlier conversation with Runnell. I realized that although Alamgir knew how to find the radio stations he wanted when he was in a given meter band, he didn't seem to know that in all places around the world, the reception on short wave radios, both large and small, is always clearest in the lower meter bands in the mornings (19 or 25 meter bands) and in the higher bands in the evenings (49 and 60 meter bands). I wasn't sure why this was the case, but thought that it had something to do with the revolution of the earth in relation to the sun. So I asked Alamgir to come over with his radio.

"Try the 49 or 60 meter band instead." He flipped the dial and soon enough he started to hear the same Urdu tones beaming out the Radio Pakistan news with which he had temporarily lost contact moments before. Next he flipped the dial to Radio China. BBC and VOA were now clear again. Alamgir broke into a broad smile; he was happy as a kid listening to his first radio program.

I began to miss my Sony shortwave radio which was locked away in my suitcase in the aircraft's hold. Through many trips, my shortwave radio had been my constant companion, and God knows how many times I had listened to BBC on the road. I seldom visited a place without listening to the news service at night or in the early morning as I woke up. Ever since I was a kid, I had loved to listen to

news. My uncle used to call me *Reuters* because whenever I saw him, I used to rattle off the latest news. So BBC and VOA were part of my baggage, as necessary on these trips as clothing and bottled water.

Soon after another Ariana-catered dinner (chicken curry again), I heard the noisy sounds of jeeps and trucks engines, and the whirring of several generators, not just one by the wing. Within minutes, all sorts of activity descended on the aircraft. Alamgir's earlier conversation, full of instructions, now took on meaning. Both doors of the aircraft were flung open. A breath of fresh air again. Alamgir, posted himself at the front doorway, Nasir Jamal in mid-cabin, and Ali Butt in the rear. Not only was food coming on board, but fuel trucks were arriving. Fuel trucks!

My heart beat rapidly and the blood rushed to my head. It appeared that we were going to be on the move again. Were we about to be released, or was Alamgir just going to change the location, but not the basic situation?

Alamgir walked to the back of the aircraft after Nasir Jamal had relieved him up front. Five minutes later, Alamgir returned. *Good God!* He was carrying a machine gun cradled tightly against his muscular body. How, heaven on earth, had he gotten hold of a machine gun? He certainly did not have the weapon in the beginning. As Alamgir approached us, Craig Clymore leaned over and pointed at Alamgir's machine gun.

"Hey, man... that's a nice baby you've got there, can I hold it?" he asked, with a look of curious little boy running amuck in a toy store.

Alamgir shook his head. "Are you crazy? Sit down here," he barked at Clymore, pointing to the empty seat next to me (Engineer Nadir was back in the cockpit at that point).

The bravado nature and foolishness of Clymore's behavior seemed to amuse Alamgir, who smiled broadly. Clymore obeyed and collapsed onto the seat, his legs sprawled out. He must have been at least six-foot-three. So my companion now was Craig Clymore, crazy Craig. I tightened my seat belt for the roller coaster emotional ride that I was sure to witness in the coming days.

Alamgir walked to the mid-cabin, got Charlotte Hubbell out of her seat, brought her to the front and took her through the exit door. She barely had time to turn around and wave to her husband. Probably wondering if she would ever see him again, she looked right past me, unaware of course of my role in securing her release. Alamgir then repeated the same sequence in the case of Debbie Weisner.

Engineer Nadir came by to get a pack of cigarettes that he had left on the seat.

"So how come they released the two women?" I asked Nadir.

"It was the negotiators' condition for refuelling our aircraft. Younus told me that it was you who told the control tower that the two American women were still on board. That was a good deed you did. I hope they meet up with her husbands soon, and I hope that all of us will get free soon. It's up to Allah."

Nadir smiled. He shook my hand and returned to his duty station up front.

It gave me a warm feeling to know that I had been instrumental in getting the information out that led to the release of the two Americans and that Rannell had come through in passing it on to the necessary authorities. It was a pity that my gamble could not have yielded greater results, such as the release of all of us remaining hostages.

As Nadir was about to enter the cockpit, Alamgir came over to him and whispered something in his ear. Then, loudly, he ordered him to go down the staircase and stand under the aircraft's wing. This command surprised me. Standing at the door, Alamgir trained his machine gun on Nadir, his finger clutching the trigger. I looked out the window. Nadir's head was raised and he was staring at the underside of the wing as the fuel truck continued to disgorge fuel through the hose clamped into the wing. After some five minutes, the driver unclashed the hose and moved his truck to the right side of the plane. Nadir followed suit and Alamgir took up a position on the staircase itself, pointing his gun towards the right wing, below which Nadir now stood.

This strange sequence lasted for about twenty minutes. Nadir then reentered the plane, said

something to Alamgir and came to our seats again, this time to get a handkerchief that he had left in the seat pocket. He wiped his brow. The tension showed on his forehead.

I asked Nadir why Alamgir had made him observe the refueling so closely.

Nadir replied: "You told me that you like to play chess, isn't that right? The 'king', Tariq, is dead. The 'queen', the American wife, has departed. All the women and children are gone. We are just pawns on this board. How is Alamgir to know whether, while the aircraft was being refueled, someone might not have planted a magnetic time bomb under the wing. You don't know who to trust in this situation. Alamgir had to take precautions, so he chose me to be his guard. As an engineer, I can spot anything wrong, even in the dark. But I was given a flashlight just in case."

"If Alamgir was so suspicious, why did he not go down there himself to check?" I asked.

"He couldn't. The soldiers might've shot him in the back."

Nadir was a wise fellow, and I felt lucky that he had been my companion for nearly a week.

Crazy Craig was going to be a poor substitute, it seemed.

I thought about Nadir's analogy. It all seemed so logical. Probably, the Soviet Union was by now embarrassed by its impotence in resolving the situation, or worse still, it may have chosen not to do so. So why not let the plane fly out instead? In fact, it might be convenient if the plane just vanished and disintegrated somewhere, but not on the soil of this satellite country, Afghanistan. And if the Soviets did not want to see our plane blown up, perhaps Zia-ul-Haq did. He had enormous political capital to gain if he could announce that the hijackers had in effect killed more than a hundred passengers as a result of an aircraft explosion in mid-air, compared to the fallout that would result from capitulating to the hijackers' demands. So if a bomb could have been placed under the aircraft, assuming that someone at the airport could be found to go along with such a scheme, it would be a neat, if macabre end to the whole embarrassing situation from Zia's point of view.

I started to panic. What if Nadir's eyesight had failed him, or the flashlight had been too weak

to pick up everything on the wing?

There was still the puzzle as to who had supplied Alamgir with the machine gun earlier on? With this increased firepower available to him and his accomplices, the chances of our being able to make an escape evaporated. Moreover, it reduced the chances for any possible SWAT teams to do their work. Not that I was sorry about the SWAT difficulties, since these units tended to come bursting through the front sections of planes and those sitting there would naturally be at the most risk of getting caught in crossfire with the hijackers (in November 1985, the storming of a hijacked Egypt Air plane in Malta resulted in 57 deaths as the plane caught fire when it was stormed from outside by a crack Egyptian unit, known as the Thunderbolts. Alamgir's ability to use a machine gun had shifted the balance inexorably towards him and it undermined any chances of an imminent end to the standoff.

I would later learn that Alexander Haig, Chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff and former head of the National Security Council alleged that "the Soviet Union had aided and abetted this hijacking by supplying the hijackers with a machine gun." The U.S. intelligence information was excellent, not that it was helping us aboard the aircraft at this point.

By 9:00 p. m., the plane was ready to roll. Captain Saeed Khan, sick as he was, returned to the cockpit. Copilot Younus was in his regular chair. Alamgir took up his position and stood immediately behind Engineer Nadir. In his right hand, Alamgir kept the pistol trained on the crew and with his left hand he pointed the machine gun towards us through the open cockpit door. He left nothing to chance again.

The geography of the region makes it impossible to fly out of Afghanistan without overflying either the Soviet Union, Pakistan, or Iran. So I wondered which route we would we be taking? At ten p.m., with the snow-covered mountains glistening in the moonlight, the aircraft thundered down the runway. Given the position of the moon outside my window, we appeared to be flying southeast. My heart was thumping louder than it had done all week. I feared that our plane might explode at any

moment, considering what Nadir had said about the possibility of a bomb being placed under the aircraft's wings. I tried to shut out from my mind the frightening images of a plane crashing and concentrate on what might happen next, once we got to wherever we were headed.

The mountains receded in the distance; the aircraft banked to the right. This indicated we were headed over Iran. Moments later, I saw a speck of light flash by on the left. All of a sudden, the lights on our wing flashed on and off twice, and the speck of light went away, I later found out that these were Iranian F-4 Phantom jets that had come to check out who we were. Once the their pilots saw the green and white tail of PIA's logo, they moved off.

We flew for several hours. Nadir had told me that with the extra-full load of fuel that we had taken on board, and with a lighter passenger load than we had when we took off from Karachi, and assuming a speed of the usual 650 miles per hour, we might be able to make it through to Europe. I prayed that our destination be Athens, Rome or Frankfurt, because in any one of these airports, under Western control, our chances of survival would increase. I smiled inside at the prospect (or illusion) of being able to fly to Western soil.

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Sunday afternoon, March 8, Washington, 2:00 p.m.

Jim Theodores mistakenly thought that he would be able to get a brief rest that afternoon. It was not long since he had returned to his home after spending another fruitless morning at the office waiting for word out of Kabul. The telex machine had been quiet, and the phone even quieter.

It had been only three minutes earlier that Theodores had sunk into his lounge sofa and drifted off to sleep when his phone rang. It was the supervisor at the Bank's cable office on the line.

"Come quick, Mr. Theodores. We've received a telex from U.N. New York. The PIA plane has

left Kabul. There is an attached telex from U.N. Kabul. They don't mention the plane's destination."

His head still full with the government's startling allegation that Murtaza Bhutto was the mastermind behind this incident, Theodores rose quickly, slipped on his coat, grabbed his ever-present small note-book and went on his way for his second trip that day into downtown Washington. He felt odd -- PK326 was on the move and he didn't even know where it was headed. His pulse quickened, as he raced his car through Canal Roads' speed zone. As he entered his office, the phone was ringing. It was Sjoed Boorsma, head of the U. N.'s Emergency Coordination Unit on the line (the PIA incident was not the only one of concern that day; some U.N. relief workers had run into some trouble at the refugee camps in the NWFP; local tribes were arguing and the workers were caught in the middle).

Boorsma, in his usual style of carefully measured words said:

"We've just had word that the PIA plane departed Afghanistan at 10:00 p.m. Kabul time."

"Where's it going? We've got to know where that plane is going."

"We don't know, I'm afraid. Perhaps by the morning we will get more information, possibly from Bonev. Our people here think that the plane is headed for Beirut or Cairo."

Theodores thanked Boorsma for the information and called his counterpart at the U.S. State Department. The U.S. Government could be relied on to provide more detailed information drawing on its sophisticated intelligence system.

"Al, PK326 is on the move. Can you guys lend a hand and track the plane's movements. We don't know where it is headed."

"We can do better than that. The guys at the Pentagon have had a satellite reading on the plane for nearly an hour now. Apparently, the aircraft is heading at this moment towards North Africa -- Libya, is the guess. I'll let you know if things change. We have three U. S. citizens still on board."

Theodores hit a new low. How was he going to tell Gwynn it might be Libya?

He called Gwynn's house; the line was busy. Before he had a chance to dial again, another call

came in from the State Department informing Theodores that the plane had changed direction and was now headed north, up the Bahrain Straits. This was better news for him to convey.

"Gwynn, Jeff's plane took off an hour ago from Kabul, that is ten p.m. their time."

"What's the destination?" Gwynn's voice was full of trepidation.

"Damascus, Beirut, or Cairo, is the thinking -- any one of these three. Some said Jeddah or Dubai. I would rule these last two out as they both take a tough line on terrorism. Unless the plane is low on fuel, the hijackers will not want to touch down at those airports. My guess is that it will be Nicosia or Damascus. The plane took on a full load of fuel at Kabul, so it could even get to Athens or Rome, but these are unlikely. You can rule out any Western airports. Teheran is also out as the government refused a request for asylum, which was apparently radioed directly from the plane last night. Also, Jeddah is unlikely as President Zia-ul-Haq was in Saudi Arabia last week; the collaboration between the Pakistanis and the Saudis has always been close."

The State Department contact called back. "Our radio monitoring has picked up Alamgir's voice requesting permission to land in Damascus."

Theodores was relieved that the plane's destination was not Benghazi after all; dealing with the Libyans would have been a nightmare. Beirut would not have been any better as it lacked a government to speak of. He called Gwynn Davies.

"It's Damascus. The plane is over the Bahrain Straits right now."

Gwynn thanked Theodores and hung up. She felt more hopeful, knowing that the plane had left Kabul. The calmness at Quaker Meeting in the morning had given her a renewed sense of optimism that the crisis would soon come to an end.

Theodores lay down on the couch in his office and shut out the scenes around him. He desperately needed the sleep because he knew that once the plane landed in Damascus, a whole new chapter in the ordeal would unfold.

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In Islamabad, Wolfgang Siebeck was greatly relieved that the PIA plane had departed South Asia. At last he had an opportunity to sort the backlog of mail that cluttered his desk. He came to a scruffy envelope on which his name was scribbled. He ripped open the envelope and pulled out what appeared to be a paper napkin from inside it. He recognized my handwriting which ran across the white flimsy page. My script was quite discernible, which he read quickly. He felt a strange quiver; what if something similar happened to him one day? Would he also have to write his final instructions in this way? Not likely, as his Teutonic upbringing had resulted in a methodical approach to matters, including the question of one's last will.

Siebeck rose from his chair and walked to his safe. He put the napkin-will on the top shelf and locked the door. My secret was secure with him for now. He swore that until I had later proven to him that I had drafted a proper will, he would keep that napkin in his safe.

Siebeck was perplexed as to how the envelope had come to his house, since it contained no postmark. He asked the driver if anyone had come to the front gate recently. Yes, there had been a man at the gate, accompanied by a woman. The guard had not asked who they were, but had accepted the envelope from them, which he held to the light to see that there was nothing in it other than paper. Mail bombs were known to exist in Pakistan at the time. After finding the envelope to be clean, the guard passed it onto his employer, Siebeck.

THE MIDDLE EAST: THE PLOT THICKENS

CHAPTER FOURTEEN
A CHANGE IN DIRECTION: THE SYRIAN-LIBYAN LINK

As in the case of the bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland in Decemeber 1988, there was also a link between Syria and Libya in our case, which was not apparent from the outset. The link was revealed in the interplay of the radio transmissions and by the hijackers' requests, which started to become more frantic.

Day Eight: Monday, March 9, Damascus Runway

The dawn began to break. Numerous villages dotted the countryside. In the distance lay a sprawling city nestled in the hills. Naila Raza asked passengers to fasten their seat belts, conveying a pretense of normalcy to the flight, perhaps the only aspect that seemed normal. As we came into land, I was unable to identify the airport as the sign above the terminal building was still shrouded in darkness. I asked Clymore if he had any idea as to where we were; he was none the wiser. The pilot taxied to the end of the runway and parked to the side. Fire engines, ambulances, and armored personnel carriers lined the apron. Alamgir's voice came over the intercom, ordering us not to move out our seats, a rude reminder as to who we were and what was our situation.

Alamgir walked up the aisle to the cockpit, stepped inside, and exchanged brief words with the pilot and copilot.

As the light brightened, I could see several airplanes of Syrian Air parked by the side of the terminal building. I figured that we were in Damascus. Engineer Nadir had that moment emerged from the cockpit to retrieve a piece of paper which he had left in the pocket of the seat occupied by Clymore.

"Is this Damascus?" I enquired.

Nadir nodded. A sense of relief came over me to know that we were not in Libya or Lebanon. At least the Syrians had a stable government, even though it was considered to be authoritarian and also supportive of certain Palestinian actions in the past which Israel and the United States had called terrorist, but others had characterized as a necessary part of the Palestinian liberation struggle. President Hafez

Assad was considered to be firmly in control. Syria maintained strong ties with radical Arab countries and less so with moderate or conservative countries like Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. Still, knowing that I was in Syria, gave me a sense of comfort compared to having been in Afghanistan.

The routine was much the same as in Kabul -- airport officials came on board, accompanied by a few army officers, looked around briefly, and left. There was no need to collect passports this time, as I assumed that Alamgir still had these in his possession. The Red Cross did not visit this time either.

Syrian ground staff came on to board to clean the filthy aircraft.

The radio crackled.

"This is the British Broadcasting Service, Asia Service. It is Monday, the ninth of March. Here is the news. The hijacking of a Pakistani airliner, now in its eighth day, has moved to Damascus, Syria. A report filed from Damascus stated that the aircraft is on the runway at Damascus airport, having arrived in the early hours of the morning from Kabul. The Syrian authorities have sealed off the aircraft from other activity and are in contact with the hijackers. There are no further reports of any fatalities or injuries other than the one person who was shot and killed in Kabul last Friday. The conditions that the hijackers have set for freeing the one-hundred-and-ten hostages who still remain on board is the release of 92 prisoners from Pakistani jails. The Government is adamant that it will not release any criminals. Nevertheless, it is trying to locate the prisoners. It is believed that the government may make a counter-offer involving the release of a smaller number of prisoners, but it is not known how many or when.

The group, who have identified themselves as members of the underground organization, Al Zulfikar, are insisting upon being granted safe passage for themselves and the prisoners. The leader has indicated to airport authorities that the deadline, which had expired last Friday and had led to the killing of a Pakistani passenger in Kabul, has now been extended for the last time. The new deadline is Thursday, 7:00 p.m. Damascus time. It is unclear whether the Government of Pakistan is willing to meet the hijackers' demands, even though it has set in motion preliminary steps to find the listed prisoners.

The passenger who was killed last week was a senior official in the Pakistan Government, being the Second Secretary of the Government of Pakistan's embassy in Teheran. Arrangements are being made for a state funeral to be held in Islamabad. Major Rahim will be buried with state honors. He leaves behind a widow and young daughter.

We have no further news on the status or well-being of the half-dozen foreign nationals still trapped on board. As new information comes in, we will update this report."

The information on Tariq Rahim, now confirmed on BBC, made his killing seem even more shocking to me. Besides having sat next to him in the rear, the part about his widow and daughter made me feel grief, even though I did not know him.

We were by now too far away from Pakistan to receive a clear broadcast in Urdu, but there was some Arabic news, none of which I could understand.

Monday night passed uneventfully. Since it was much warmer in Damascus, we were no longer freezing at night and I was able to snatch a few hours of sleep. It felt like a marathon and I was getting ready for the second week of survival. I longed for a shower and my beard was driving me crazy. The odor of our clothing was unbearable. But it was nothing compared to the stench from the toilets.

When Alamgir walked by, I asked him if he could arrange to get the toilets cleaned.

"Why don't the Syrian ground staff clean the toilet?" I asked.

Alamgir had recently shaved, not his moustache ut his cheeks and he had clean, pressed clothing on. Courtesy of Syrian Air, assumed. The thought of Alamgir having been given clean clothing made me furious. Even prisoners had it better; at least they receive clean T-shirts and overalls every few days.

Day Nine, Tuesday, March 10, Damascus Runway

The stench from the front bathroom became unbearable, so I pleaded with Alamgir that he do something about the stopped-up toilet. He walked to the cockpit, picked up the radio, and asked ground

control for two shovels and a half dozen large brown bags.

Within ten minutes, the shovels arrived, brought on by two cleaners who left the plane immediately. I was perplexed, but not for long. Alamgir passed to me one of the shovels and the other to Clymore.

"You want it clean. You do it!"

He thrust a couple of brown bags in my hand, just like supermarket bags.

"Put it in here! he ordered.

Clymore and I took turns to shovel out the accumulated fecies. crap. As unpleasant as the task was, the opportunity to have a clean, toilet nearby to use outweighed the burden. As compensation for our good work, Alamgir gave Clymore a cigarette and me a drink of water.

When Alamgir had walked away, I asked Clymore what he did for a living.

"I have a small shoe importing business. Here, take my card."

The Little Big Foot Shoe Corporation, it read.

"I try to visit Pakistan several times a year and countries in the Middle-East to buy shoes in quantity. Look at that guy, Alamgir, first he looks like he wants to blow our heads off with that machine gun of his, and then he asks us to clean out the crap. I hope we get out of this fucking aircraft soon."

Clymore picked up his Walkman, slipped the earphones over his head, and went into a deep sleep. The sound of some hard rock music reached my ears. It relaxed me a little.

The elderly Pakistani lady was struggling from the heat. She waved a handkerchief with so much energy that I thought her small hand would break off.

Alamgir was conversing with a few Pakistani passengers seated a few rows behind me. They talked intensely. I could not hear exactly what was being said, and in any case it sounded as if it was in Urdu. In any event, we were being supplied with enough news by courtesy of BBC, VOA, and the

migrant worker's radio.

One of the passengers, a mullah from Nigeria, came to the front of the aircraft for noontime prayers. In Kabul, I had seen him kneeling in the back of the plane; now, he kneeled in an opposite direction for our aircraft had changed its position in relation to the direction of Mecca.

My anxiety increased when I saw soldiers in full battle dress massing on the runway. It looked as if a storming of the plane was at hand.

Meanwhile, I could overhear Alamgir's voice from the cockpit asking the control tower for fuel to take us to Libya.

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Day Nine, Tuesady March 10, Damascus Runway

Not much of significance transpired on that day, except one memorable episode. At the end of the day, Alamgir approached the taller flight attendant, Farzana Sharif. He said something to her and then walked away. Soon after, the second flight attendant, Naila Raza, came up. The two women began to talk quietly with each other, each holding the other's hands. I could hear Farzana saying: "No, you go!"

Naila too was saying "No, you go!"

It seemed that Alamgir had offered to release one of the flight attendants, as he was originally about to do in Kabul but had changed his mind at the last moment. And now it appeared as if neither woman was wanting to leave, or if she was, her sense of duty was forcing her to opt for remaining on board.

After about five minutes of this passionate, wrenching scene, which brought the tears down my cheeks, Farzana put her arm on Naila's and leaned over to kiss her. They both wept. Then Farzana lifted her bag and turned around to pass through the exit door. She took one last look at us, and muttered

"Allah Akbar". Then she flung her pink scarf over her face, pulled her sari up as she crossed the metal door sill, and walked down the stairs. Within moments, she disappeared into a van marked Ariana Airlines, but not before she took one last look in our direction. Then she was gone, her twenty two years wrapped in serenity.

Naila Raza walked calmly to the rear. I was filled with admiration for her sense of duty and her bravery. There was a marked difference between her and the rest of us -- we were being held against our will, but she chose to stay on. I later learned that Alamgir had insisted that one attendant must stay and the choice was dictated by the consideration of who had fewer family at home to lose.

Later that night, while Alamgir was in the cockpit, Naila Raza came by to see how we were faring up front. Sitting there at that time was myself, the elderly Pakistani woman, her son, and Clymore. The businessman had gone to the bathroom, accompanied by Nasir Jamal.

Naila's pink scarf brushed my face as she leaned over. Her scent had a sweet aroma, like orchids. She had dark, mysterious eyes and the "cameo-like" purity of her skin glistened, despite the length of time on board. Her long black hair was pleated behind her and pulled to the side.

We talked about Farzana Sharif's bravery, and her own, about which she blushed. I prayed that Farzana had arrived home safely in Lahore. I hoped against hope that the favor she had done for me -- passing my paper napkin will onto one of the departing passengers in Kabul -- had borne fruit in that the will had reached its destination at Wolfgang Siebeck's home in Islamabad.

Naila Raza and I talked for a while. She had only been flying with PIA for a few years. Until now, all of her flights had been domestic, and this was not the type of international flight that she had envisaged for herself. She hoped to get the opportunity to fly on PIA's DC-10s and 747s to Europe and New York one day. She liked the work, especially the opportunity to see various places and meet different people.

Until this hijacking, she had enjoyed her work, but found it quite tiring, especially serving

hundreds of food trays to hungry Gulf workers, most of whom were taking only their first or second flight of their lives. The flights to Peshawar and Quetta were usually filled with migrant workers.

Naila then told me about a tragic crash at Jeddah airport in Saudi Arabia that had occurred a few years earlier on a chartered plane filled with pilgrims returning from the annual Haj in Mecca. The plane crashed soon after take-off from Jeddah airport in Saudi Arabia. Apparently, when the crew of that flight announced that lunch would be served, a passenger proceeded to haul out his portable gas cooker and lit it. The plane was soon engulfed in flames and the pilot tried to make an emergency crash landing. It was too late. More than two hundred people died, including the crew.

After telling me this bizarre story, Naila demurely pulled her sari to the side so that she would not trip in the narrow aisle and turned around. Her soft fabric made a swishing sound on the decrepit carpet floor, adding a touch of sad elegance to the strange environment, which by now was not all that strange.

Years later, on a trans-Pacific flight, a United Airlines pilot told me that the gas cooker story was inaccurate. Apparently, it had been made up by the aircraft manufacturers and the Saudi authorities who were embarrassed that the pilot had failed to promptly return to the runway until it was too late. According to this version, the engine of the Lockheed Tristar caught on fire as a result of mechanical failure; a gas cooker was not the cause of the fire on board. Due to the lack of release of an official investigation report, I was never able to confirm which version was correct – Naila Raza's or the United Airlines pilot.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN
REFLECTIONS ON DEATH ROW

Many times, I have gone over in my mind what was so different about this ordeal; what was it that left me with the greatest impression? Bursts of movement contrasted by long periods of inactivity; flashes of light contrasted by the dark sky around us; the clap of a bullet contrasted by a pervading eerie silence; and the smell of blood on the seat next to one. These were difficult memories to deal with. They evoked all of my sensory system. I could even taste the bitterness of death, Tariq Rahim's death.

But none of it matched the type of thoughts I experienced when told that in five hours time, I myself would be shot. Five hours that seemed like five years; five hours that also seemed like five seconds. My mind raced back and forth -- certain events paraded in front of me, while others lingered on, adopting a significance that I had not appreciated when they first occurred.

Having witnessed a man shot in front of me the week before, I had every expectation that when told that the same thing would happen to me, it would take place. That was my death row experience, which I can never forget.

Yet death row prisoners, if convicted of a serious crime, might feel some remorse. I had no remorse to feel, for I had done nothing wrong other than to be identified with four other people because our faces placed us in a category different from others on the plane.

In my case, I saw no irony -- just bad, bad luck. For the first time in my life, and the first time in this incident, I came to understand what the word foreboding really meant. I found my mind being concentrated in a fashion that I did not imagine possible before. At one level, I thought I was seeing things through a bright mirror as certain experiences in my life flashed by; at another level, my mind was in a spin. Could these two seemingly contradictory responses co-exist? Acceptance and denial, side-by-side.

Day Ten: Wednesday, March 11, Damascus Runway

Wednesday was a repeat of Tuesday, with the only difference being that Alamgir kept on radioing Tripoli and occasionally Teheran for permission to have our aircraft land there, should he choose to move the venue. Teheran rejected all requests. Tripoli responded yes, but Alamgir said that he had to await the release of the prisoners. Often he would curse and click the trigger on his pistol, back and forth. It was another sleepless night. Clymore droned on all night, tapping his feet to the sounds of his Walkman and singing quietly Beatles songs. *Yesterday* played continuously and the voice of John Lennon filled my brain that night.

Years later, after Lennon was shot, I would think of that bullet that ended Lennon's life on the

streets of Manhattan. Once I dreamt that the bullet that killed John Lennon came from Alamgir's gun. But the person who picked up the gun was not Alamgir, but Nasir Jamal. For it was Jamal who bore a resemblance to Lennon's real assassin. The world of murder travelled some strange routes.

Day Eleven: Thursday, March 12, 2:00 p.m., Damascus Runway (Washington time: 6:00 a.m.)

Alamgir opened the cockpit door and looked outraged. His eyes were like red hot coals. With a sneer on his face, he pointed to Clymore and said:

"Zia doesn't answer our demands. Tonight we start at 7:00 o'clock. You CIA agents, You first!" Pointing to me, he added: " And you as well! You're just like the Americans."

My mind raced back to the previous week, the memory of Tariq Rahim slumped on the seat immediately to the right of me, blood gushing out from the deep bullet wounds to his head and neck. The sight had almost made me wretch. This time, I was thrown into a strange feeling of terror on the one hand, and a resigned acceptance of fate -- my fate -- on the other. I felt no panic; just a sad, bitter feeling. The world of the abstract had come down to this: tonight it is your turn.

The closeness of everything seemed overwhelming; the walls of death were closing in on me. Death,D-minus five hours, D-minus four and fifty nine seconds, fifty eight seconds,

And I was not even being given the privilege of receiving last visits. In one respect, I wanted to be like a prisoner on death row, and receive a visit from a Rabbi who would administer prayers before execution and last rites after it. I wondered whether Clymore wanted the same from a priest.

As I trembled in my seat, hoping that Alamgir would not notice, for I was not going to give him the pleasure of seeing the effect of his psychological torture, my body felt like lead. My trousers and shirt were again wet with sweat, ... cold sweat this time.

Alamgir pulled the shades down; the bright light by the window went dark. He waved his arm at a man who was approaching up the aisle and indicated that this person should proceed right to the

front. The man had something long and cylindrical under his arm wrapped in white cloth. Could it be the machine gun. Was Alamgir going to take dozens of us out in the process, a mass slaying?

The man turned around, pulled off the cloth to reveal a small rug, which he quickly unrolled and laid flat. The man's Ibo hat was tilted to the left, his six-and-a half feet frame doubled over. The Nigerian mullah whom I had seen at the back of the plane as a hostage had arrived to perform his task. Kneeling down in prayer, he begun chanting. Apparently, at Alamgir's insistence, the mullah was brought forward to substitute for my rabbi and Clymore's priest. We had our last prayers though it was not in the form that I was used to.

I looked for no absolution. I felt no remorse other than the pain that would be wrought my family. I almost felt grateful that Alamgir, the executioner, had allowed this small piece of religious propriety to take place on the plane at our feet. Gratitude! The Stockholm Syndrome was surfacing again, if only for a fleeting moment.

Alamgir walked to the cockpit. He began another Urdu speech; his tone was grim. People's expressions froze. I asked Engineer Nadir, who was sitting across the aisle from me at this point, to summarize the speech.

In essence, Alamgir's patience had run out. Zia-ul-Haq would have to take responsibility for the actions, which Alamgir would take at nightfall. Unless by some miracle of Allah, Zia dropped his stubbornness and agreed to release the prisoners. Alamgir did not specify over the intercom what the actions would be, although the pulling down of the shades was done to indicate to the control tower that the final deadline had arrived. The speech was relatively brief this time.

First, panic, and then a strange calmness came over me. This was it, the final few hours and nothing could be done, except to wait and count. I tried to figure out the pecking order as to who would go first -- Clymore or me in front, Hubbell in the middle, or the other two Westerners in the rear -- the youthful Scandinavian-looking passenger (Ericsson) with the ski parka, and the chain-smoking, heavier-set

man (Mangum). I wondered whether the killing would be done in the seats as before, or at the door, from where it would surely be simpler to throw the body out onto the tarmac instead of dragging the ankle down the aisle again.

There was something in Alamgir's body language to Craig Clymore, and his in return, which told me that Clymore was unlikely to be the first to be shot. Alamgir seemed to like him, perhaps they had some commonality of which I was not aware.

D-minus four, ...my mind went into a spin -- bright red streaks, dark gray shades, revolving figures, faces from my past, stark impressions of the future suspended weightless in the air -- all of this flew before my eyes. Sounds of voices -- my grandfather, my father, my mother, my brother, Gwynn - - all first in sequence and then in chorus resonated in my brain. Why you? they asked? Why in Damascus, twenty miles from the Golan Heights?

If a sheet of photographic paper would have been able to capture my mood at this moment, the paper would have to be wrinkled -- I was in turmoil, my thoughts wildly racing.

Childhood scenes, like a plastic boat floating in my bathtub; boyhood heroes like crippled WWII pilot Douglas Bader in his Spitfire fighter plane; JFK and RFK; Mahatma Gandhi thrown off the train in Natal, Nelson Mandela thrown into jail to begin what would turn out to be twenty-seven years of imprisonment -- all of these images raced by.

And why Pakistan, my father was asking? I had come to the country as part of my work, part of my life. I did not expect it to be the reason for my death.

Next, the most wrenching moment I had ever spent flooded back, when as a student I stood inside the empty Dachau concentration camp. I had wanted to get a sense of what some of my family went through in this darkest chapter in history. In front of my eyes on the plane, I could see the faces of Raya and Issy, my cousins who met each other in Auschwitz and got married after the end of the war, to settle into a peaceful life in North Philadelphia. New lives born from a pit of black death.

And as I heard my father's questions, my heart cried out for him. I was sure he would not be standing up at all well to the perilous situation his youngest son had fallen into (he later told me how much this incident had ravaged him, yet his mind was just beginning to be ravaged by Alzheimer's disease; and was there a link between PK326 and my father's early on-set of Alzheimer's, a link for which I felt some guilt for many years later.

My tears went out to my mother, who was always the first to show tears. And I cried out for Gwynn, who would be the one having to endure the longest period of pain, year after year wondering what, if anything, could have been done differently to save her husband?

I cried no tears for myself; I did not even feel sorry for myself, only for my loved ones. They would be the ones to remember; I would have departed to another world.

Which world? As a Jew, I had never had a clear belief in life after death. Yes, my spirit would live on in some way, but in which way I was not sure. I did not believe in heaven or hell, nor in reincarnation. I had searched the scriptures of the Talmud, read the words of the *Memorial Service for the Departed (Yizkor)*; none of it gave me any sense of what would happen to my spirit.

My mind felt overloaded with these thoughts and I preferred not to dwell on them.

I wondered what some people on death row felt before going to meet the executioner. Irony? Bitterness? Sorrow? How must have Zulfikar Ali Bhutto felt, realizing that his death sentence was confirmed by the general whom he had promoted over the heads of more senior generals at the time. On April 3, 1979, the day before he was hanged, Bhutto in a weakened condition from his lengthy prison incarceration talked lovingly with Benazir Bhutto about joining his father and mother at the ancestral burial plot in Larkana. He maintained his innocence to the end and he died proudly, although with obvious bitterness toward General Zia-ul-Haq.

And even closer, some ten feet away closer, did Tariq Rahim feel irony as he faced his executioners, if it indeed was true that Tariq Rahim had turned in critical evidence during Bhutto's trial,

as Alamgir had alleged.

I wondered what it must feel like to be convicted and go to the electric chair for a crime that one did not commit. In 1953 Julius and Ethel Rosenberg were executed at Sing Sing prison in New York for selling secrets to the Soviet Union, which enabled it to manufacture the atomic bomb. Many legal experts believed that the Rosenberg's were innocent and did not receive a fair trial.

Englishman Sydney Carton, substituting for Charles Darnay at the guillotine in France felt "that it was a far better thing that he was doing, than he had ever done." But that was the stuff of Dickensonian fiction; my Tale of Two Cities -- Kabul and Damascus -- could not substitute for London and Paris, even two hundred years apart. A different era, a different story, but death is the same. There is nothing after that.

And what could millions of people in Auschwitz and Buchenwald have thought when they stripped naked to take a shower and all that came out of the spouts was deadly gas? What does a person think about when the clock is running towards an announced execution hour? D-minus three, D-minus two, the clock runs on. The sound of my watch ticking had grown into that of a time-bomb. Would someone be there to stop the detonator going off? D-minus one ...

The thought that depressed me most was that although I had smuggled a napkin of last wishes off the plane, I had omitted to leave any instructions as to where I wanted to be buried. This was not a straight-forward matter for me, being a foreign transplant. The first thirty-four years of my life had not shed any light as to where I wished to be buried, and in what manner, but I figured that I had another thirty-four years at least to arrive at some answers. And even if the answer came to me as late as in D-minus two seconds, I had no way of communicating it to my family.

As I thought about these things, I became repentant that I had not led a more religious life. I prayed for God's forgiveness in as deep a way as I knew how, and I wept silently. I prayed and prayed that God was listening to me in my hour of greatest need.

I worried that my body might never find its way back home; it would be stuck in Syria somewhere. And if it was consigned, how cold that aircraft would seem. Others had faced such a bleak prospect -- soldiers killed in WWII; soldiers killed in countless other wars, and people succumbing to the ravages of sickness overseas. In many cases, especially WWI and WWII, relatives would not even get the bodies of their loved ones back. At least my relatives would probably get mine back.

Instead of fear, I felt my anger rising again. What the hell was Alamgir doing this for? This was his battle, not ours; He had no right to have us here. Indignation started to grow in me for the first time in ten days. I was going to tackle him, somehow. I was not going to go out like a sacrificial lamb.

Then the rational side of me told me to put such notions aside, because I would likely get killed in the process. I had little chance of wresting his weapons away. The prudent course would have said sit still, hoping that some miracle would still occur. Zia might still yield, though there was no evidence of this in the first ten days. And the Syrians, on behalf of the Pakistanis, could still storm the plane to liberate us. They had one hour left.

In the last hour, I tried as hard as I could to hatch an escape plan. If I were to feign sickness, it would not have worked. It had taken much froth at the mouth before the passenger with the epileptic condition was freed. I could not possibly feign something like that. I thought that if for any reason Alamgir opened the front door of the plane, I would quickly rise from my seat, run the ten yards or so towards the door and toss myself out. Did it matter if I would fracture my legs, as long as I did not fall head first onto the tarmac .

Having witnessed Tariq Rahim's execution the previous week, I had full expectation that once Alamgir said that it was next going to be our turn, he would go ahead and carry out his threat. As I thought about the impact on those I loved, I became more and more perplexed as to why someone would commit suicide, for the suffering -- and the guilt -- faced by those left behind must be enormous. Either the person is so lonely and overwhelmed by difficulties that he or she feels compelled to take such a

drastic step, or the person wishes to inflict guilt.

What would I do when the actual moment of my turn came? Would I go out as a sacrificial lamb, waiting for the bullet to come, or would I tackle Alamgir? Even I did not know the answer at that time.

Word Count: 2905

CHAPTER SIXTEEN
SNATCHED FROM THE VISE

What was the event that tipped the scale? How does the threat of a final deadline get communicated to the outside world? How do the authorities distinguish a final threat from previous "last threats"? And what pressure, if any, was brought to bear on the Government of Pakistan to resolve the situation?

Day Eleven: March 12, 2:00 p.m. Damascus Control Tower

Through the binoculars in the window of the control tower, Brigadier General Mohammed Kholi, head of Syrian military intelligence and chief negotiator in the hijacking crisis can see that the shades in the PIA plane have been drawn down. A jeep scurries across the tarmac and pulls up at the tower. Two soldiers rush upstairs with a piece of paper which they present to Brigadier Kholi's aide. Kholi walks over, grabs the note from his aide and reads it. It is addressed to the Pakistani negotiating team that arrived from Pakistan the day before. The note, signed by Alamgir aboard PK326, sets 7:00 p.m. as the new and final deadline for the Government of Pakistan to agree to the demands of the Al Zulfikar Organization. The note lists three Americans as CIA agents who will be killed at 7:00 p.m., one foreign hostage shot on the hour, every hour. After the three CIA agents are killed, if the Pakistani government still has not responded, the other two foreigners will be killed. At midnight, if there is still no response from Pakistan, the freedom fighters will have no alternative but to start killing Pakistani hostages. The note states that the Al Zulfikar Organization will agree to exchange the hostages for only 55 prisoners instead of the 92 demanded earlier, because it accepts the Government's assurance that the other 37 prisoners cannot be found or be released in time. The note concludes by reiterating that this indeed would be the final deadline.

Brigadier Kholi embraces Ambassador Safraz Khan, Pakistan's ambassador to Syria, who earlier in the day arrived back from vacation to take personal charge of the negotiations. The two men agree that the hijackers' note should be released to the official Syrian news agency, SANA.

There are now only five hours left in which something has to be done. The alternative scenarios have boiled down to just two contrasting results: either General Zia-ul-Haq is going to have to yield to the hijackers' demands or he isn't. The time for stalling is over; the time to prepare a SWAT assault operation is almost over. The Syrian special tactical units will have to rely on what men and equipment are in place -- there is no time for sending for reinforcements. However, they will wait for the cover of nightfall.

Brigadier Kholi alerts the commandet of the special unit which is lying just to the rear of the plane behind some sandbags, out of the hijackers' view. The commander tells his troops to stand by for his command to launch an assault.

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The final deadline of the hijackers was made known around the world. Jim Theodores informed Gwynn Davies of the turn in events. Should things turn out adversely, it would be far better that she be prepared for it, rather than it come as a complete shock. This was the only day of the ordeal that Gwynn could not muster up the will power and calmness to go to work. Rather, she remained glued to the radio and telephone at her home. Every call was met with fear, dreading that the worst news was about to be relayed. Yet, as was her nature, she remained hopeful. Positive thinking -- that's what was required, she told everybody, most of all herself.

Gwynn relayed the information about the final deadline to my brother Aubrey in New York, who relayed it to our parents in Johannesburg. They had asked to be kept informed of all developments, and even though this new turn in the drama might have turned out to have been tragic for them, the consensus was that our parents had to be kept informed as events were unfolding.

Aubrey had often urged me to be careful on my many overseas trips -- as if it were easy to

know from where trouble came. The third world was unpredictable at best and I had told my brother that if a crisis were to erupt, he should take charge in communicating with my our kinfolk. I had told him that it was pointless to worry about these things. Besides, Aubrey knew little about Pakistan other than it was the Muslim version of what he envisaged India to look like. If it was my judgement that it was safe to travel to Pakistan, so be it. He would not try to influence me. Besides, he faced nearly as much risk walking the West side of Manhattan where he lived.

There was a good reason why so many persons needed to be in the loop of information on this crisis. It did not need the Holocaust to demonstrate that history had wrought some unfathomable catastrophies. Prayers to God from all sources would be required. Each family member had to do his share to muster God's attention. So prayers were held in synagogues around the diaspora -- in Johannesburg, Washington, New York, and Tel Aviv. My cousins in Tel Aviv were closest geographically to Damascus airport, but a world apart in other respects.

Prayers -- silent ones -- were also said in several Quaker Meeting Houses in Washington and Philadelphia. Other friends that we had -- Protestant, Catholic, Baptist, Budhhist, Hindus and Muslims all chipped in -- Hisan from Tokyo, Sudhir from New Delhi, and Daud from Lahore.

At around the same time, countless prayers were being uttered in mosques in Pakistan by the families of the more than one hundred Pakistani hostages still trapped on board. Each family had cousins and in-laws who numbered in the dozens so it was not an exaggeration to say that thousands of people were praying in a personal way for the safety and survival of the hostages of PK326. If the hijackers had to count how many spiritual forces were aligned against the force of their guns, perhaps they would have surrendered there and then.

In Washington, Theodores calls Martijn Paijmans on the phone.

"I think we need to set in motion Plan B. We have waited long enough. Can you get Mr. McNamara to call President Zia-ul-Haq?"

Paijmans tells Theodores that although McNamara knew President Zia-ul-Haq well enough to call him, he thought that it would be better if McNamara called Waldheim and asked him to call Zia. As the president of the World Bank, it was appropriate for McNamara to call Zia, but it was equally appropriate to have Kurt Waldheim, in his capacity as Secretary-General of the U.N., do it instead. After all, it was Waldheim who had already made several appeals regarding this crisis and therefore a call from him would not seem out of place. The Bank's approach was not to intervene in a crisis like this; it was for the governments to handle it directly. All the Bank could do was what it already was doing -- monitoring the situation in the closest way possible and keeping an institutional clear head. Jim Theodores, amongst others, was providing that head and there was no need to change course at this time.

At 8:00 a.m. (New York time) on this morning, May 12 (4:00 p.m. Damascus time or in the midst of the final five hour countdown), Kurt Waldheim cables General Zia-ul-Haq, urging restraint and the fullest possible effort to resolve the impasse. Waldheim offers to take any steps that Zia might think would help. Zia listens and says he will revert back to Waldheim, but first he needs to call President Hafez Assad in Damsacus. The two leaders agree on a common strategy, which cannot be divulged at this point, they say. Later that morning, Zia calls Waldheim back and assures him that everything possible is being done to protect the hostages. Towards the end of the morning Assad calls Waldheim and expresses the hope that positive steps will emerge during the course of the day. The loop is complete.

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In the Damascus Control Tower, the weirdest scene of the whole crisis is about to unfold. Syrian soldiers are hustling into the tower two elderly Pakistani men, who look bewildered. They have just arrived from Pakistan aboard a military plane accompanied by Pakistani police officials. The two men are brought over to General Kholi and Ambassador Safraz Khan. Brief words are exchanged, more in the line of commands uttered than a conversation taking place. They are told that soon they will be handed the headset with the main microphone hookup and be asked to talk to the men inside PK326.

The two elderly men are the fathers of Sallamullah Khan Tippu (alias Alamgir) and of Nasir Jamal Khan (alias Rizwan). Apparently, some senior officials of the Pakistani government were successful in persuading Major General Rahim Khan that he send the hijackers' fathers to Damascus. Only two could be found. The thinking was that if the fathers were to have a chance to plead with their sons directly over the radio from the Control Tower, the hijackers might perhaps come to their senses.

The difficulty was that no one told the fathers to not scold their sons. First, Sallamullah Khan's father is handed the headset with microphone and speakers. He places it over his head and fiddles with the metal band, never having handled such an instrument before. He hears his son's voice through the speakers. He depresses the button and launches into an impassioned plea for his son to surrender to the authorities. He begs him to not continue this futile act that is certain to lead to tragic consequences. No response from the other side. So he shouts at him. Now much shouting can be heard in the speakers. The elderly Tippu sadly pulls the earphone from his head, the echo of Alamgir's voice still ringing in the headset. Then the headset is passed to the father of Nasir Jamal Khan, who repeats much the same message; he also gets into a shouting match with his son. These two strange "conversations" are concluded.

The two elderly men are hustled out of the Control Tower, but not before they have a chance to tell Ambassador Safraz Khan that their two sons sounded most angry and embarrassed at having to face their fathers over the radio in such an unexpected manner. The tactic appears to have backfired.

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Inside the plane, the final moments have arrived. A heavy pall hangs in the air. My heart thumps as loud as I have ever heard it. My head is throbbing as if it is about to burst. Alamgir's footsteps can be heard coming up the aisle. The plane is dark -- darker than the lights would reveal it. It is the darkness of impending death. By now, the eerie silence feels deafening. I can't hear myself breathe any longer. The situation is terrifying, more terrifying than I could ever imagine. I want to scream, but I cannot; I must not.

My watch reads 6:29 p.m. ... 6: 30 p.m. -- 30 minutes to go. D-minus thirty. Death is at hand. My life is about to expire.

No, no! I will tackle Alamgir: I will jump on him as he walks by, going for his right hand, the one in which he holds the pistol; I will try to grab the grenade or machine gun from the other hand. Which weapon is it? What one is in his left hand? The light is too poor for me to make it out clearly. He comes nearer. The overhead light casts a dim beam on his approaching bulk -- good, it is the grenade. With the grenade I have a chance, but not with the machine gun. I have to wrestle that grenade way from him before he dislodges the pin. I think I know how. But what about his pistol. I have to make a chop at his right hand, a hard lunge, as hard as I have ever done. He comes closer. Thank god, it is the grenade, not the machine gun.

Alamgir approaches; the radio crackles in the cockpit. Alamgir runs ahead, too quickly for me to make my lunge at him. He rushes into the cockpit and picks up the microphone. He talks for a

short while. Much shouting; something that sounds like Papa. Then he calls Nasir Jamal and passes him the headset. Jamal talks briefly; more shouting. A click on the speakers. Static again. Both men emerge from the cockpit, looking more furious than anytime in the previous eleven days, including when they shot Tariq Rahim.

Alamgir's face is flushed with anger, but also with a look of embarrassment as if he has been caught with his hand in the cookie jar. I did not know the reason but guessed that it had something to do with the radio conversation he just had, which even a few rows back sounded like a shouting match to me.

Alamgir stops, lays down the grenade, bends down and pulls out six bullets from a holster. I am about to lunge at him, but Nasir Jamal is standing right behind him, pointing a pistol at Clymore and me. Click, click, click, click, click, click -- I can hear six bullets being loaded into Alamgir's Colt 45 chamber. The sound echoes in my ears, which are burning red hot at the lobes.

If I sense that it is going to be me that will be the first to be shot, I will make my lunge as soon as Alamgir approaches -- Jamal or no Jamal. If I sense that it is going to be Clymore who will be shot first, I will save my lunge for the right moment later. I will not just sit here in my seat and be shot dead without a struggle. This is not Auschwitz. I am not in a weakened condition, helpless. Perhaps I should go for it nownow ...

I am both sweating and freezing at the same time; my physical senses have gone astray. But I feel focussed, more focussed than at any time during the last four and a half hours. Death is at hand ...I will resist it; I will go for Alamgir, whatever the consequences. One cannot just sit and wait to be shot!

The static on the radio is interrupted by a voice, shouting:

"Hello PK326, hello PK326. This is Damascus ground control, this is Damascus ground control. We have an urgent message for you. Come in please, come in please!"

Alamgir runs back to the cockpit, grabs the headset and depresses the microphone button: "

"Acha, PK326 here, go ahead Damascus."

Damascus Control Tower: "We have just received a communique from Pakistan. President Zia-ul-Haq has agreed to your conditions. The persons you want, these freedom fighters, will be flown out from Pakistan as soon as possible. Arrangements are being made right now."

An overwhelming sense of relief sweeps over me. I cannot begin to measure the extent of my elation. I start to cry, tears flowing down my cheeks. I turn and hug Clymore. His thick beard and my ten days of growth lock hairs. Engineer Nadir comes over and embraces me. His face is also wet with tears.

Yet, Alamgir is not reacting the same way at all. I hear him say:

"Where are the other prisoners? We ask for ninety-two."

Damascus Control Tower: "We are told by the Pakistani government that they cannot find the other thirty seven prisoners, either because your names are wrong or because their locations are wrong. Whatever the reason, the Pakistani government assures us that they have taken all steps to try find these other persons and that they can do nothing more. You must accept this position."

Alamgir says: "One moment, I must talk to my comrades."

He walks towards Nasir Jamal and they huddle. Ali Butt's presence is not required, it seems. It is 7:00 p.m. by now. None of the passengers seem willing to attack the hijackers as they stand in the aisle in a somewhat vulnerable position. Why would anyone attack them, when an agreement seems imminent. Why would anyone take such a chance when an accord is at hand?

Alamgir returns to the cockpit, picks up the microphone, and announces:

"We accept. What is procedure to transfer the prisoners?"

The officials at Damascus Control Tower respond that they do not know, but that they will get back to Alamgir later in the evening.

I sit back trembling, not in fright but in relief this time. I had come so close to perishing. What would have happened if Zia's message had not been received or if it had come through garbled and unintelligible? Then I, or someone else, would have been executed, all for nought. Did God really have to cut things so fine?

Word Count:2837

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN
AGAIN, THE WAITING GAME

The Government of Pakistan wanted to launch a SWAT operation, but any thought of such an action was blocked by the Syrians. General Zia-ul-Haq had few options left. To this day, it is unclear as to what specifically galvanized General Zia-ul-Haq into deciding to release the 54 prisoners. He had waited for eleven days to take any action, despite his government having received numerous threats from the lead hijacker. Alamgir's threat of the previous day to kill the foreigners on board was unlikely to have been the precipitating factor. No one put pressure on Zia to yield in the matter, although various foreign leaders issued pleas for the Pakistani and Syrian governments to take steps to protect the lives of the hostages. These pleas were all pitched at a general level -- never in terms of saving the life of any one hostage in particular.

Day Twelve: Friday, March 13, 1981, Damascus Runway

We were awakened by the crackling of the radio, which was followed by the chimes of Big Ben and a crisp English voice:

"This is London. First, the main news items. There is an apparent breakthrough in the hijacking of a Pakistani jetliner, now in its twelfth day. Radio Damascus is reporting that the Syrian negotiators have been successful in their attempts to obtain a resolution of the crisis. According to the official Syrian news agency, SANA, President Zia-ul-Haq of Pakistan has agreed to free fifty-five prisoners from Pakistani jails. The prisoners will be flown out the country and will be exchanged for the one hundred and ten hostages who still remain trapped on board the aircraft. The exact location for the prisoner-hostage exchange has not been disclosed, but indications are that it might not be in Syria. According to an unconfirmed report, a third destination is being considered, possibly Libya or Lebanon.

We have no further information on the status or well-being of the hostages, but all indications are that there has been no change in their situation. As soon as new information emerges, we will update this report."

I was not taking in the remainder of the news as again my mind was in a swirl. I had gone from

the depths of dejection to the peaks of ecstasy at being informed that an agreement had been worked out; yet there still seemed to be a possibility that we were about to be transported to a different and more dangerous location --- Benghazi airport, outside Tripoli, Libya, or Beirut airport. The English voice kept on talking, but I was not listening. My earlier sense of relief gave way to growing worry. I decided to try obtain some information from Alamgir, if a suitable opportunity arose.

A short while later, Alamgir came down the aisle. I waved my hand to attract his attention, but he brushed my arm aside and continued to stride rapidly down the aisle. He began to talk with his two accomplices, arms waving wildly. Passengers around them started to look increasingly worried. After a few minutes, Alamgir returned to the cockpit. I could hear him talking in English:

"Hello Damascus, hello Damascus, this is PK326, come in."

"We hear you PK326, go ahead."

Alamgir continued: "Inform Islamabad that released freedom fighters must be flown immediately out of Pakistan to Libya. They must wait there for our next instructions. They must not be harmed in any way, otherwise we will take severe actions here. We need food and more supplies. We need all this now! I will radio other instructions later."

Alamgir continued speaking, now in a voice filled with emotion:

"My father, I talk with him yesterday. He must come with us to Libya. Bring him to the plane. He will fly with us to Libya."

Engineer Nadir, who had sat down next to me again, summarized this last portion of Alamgir's message to me.

Here was Alamgir, who had not seen his father for some time, and he wishes to have him enter the plane and risk becoming classified as a hijacker as well. His father, more sensible than his offspring, was not about to come on board.

It was only the night before that I had thought about my father with such sadness; this morning

extra adrenalin, which kept me going. But there were limits, and my mind and body had just about reached them. So the brief rest was a welcome respite from the living nightmare, which as it turned out was far from over.

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In Washington, Gwynn was busy packing her clothes -- and some of mine -- for a flight to London. In addition to the regular clothes, she packed for me a new toothbrush, two razors (a scalpel kind, suitable for long bearded growth, and one for a regular shave) and, most importantly, two light-hearted books. I did not know at the time that Martijn Paijmans and Jim Theodores had decided that Gwynn should be at the airport, wherever it may be, since the details of where we were to be released had not yet been worked out. Gwynn had been told that she could take me on a few weeks holiday anywhere, within reason. The only snag was that Paijmans and Jim Theodores did not know to where Gwynn should fly --Damascus, Tripoli, Beirut, or (more hopefully) Rome, Athens or Nicosia, as some people had speculated might be the final destination of our plane. The Mediterranean airports were long shots, Theodores pointed out, as the exchange would likely take place at an airport in the Middle East, where the hijackers could hope to gain political asylum. But exactly where?

Gwynn had been informed that President Zia-ul-Haq had yielded at the last moment -- a scant twenty minutes before the final deadline. Those last hours were the worst she had ever spent in her life; yes, she had experienced death in her family before. But in each case, she had been able to prepare herself for it, not that she ever could fully accept such bereavements. Peaceful death had an abstract quality to it; violent death came unexpectedly and it had no abstract feeling to it. Gwynn shuddered to think that her husband had come within twenty minutes of that horror. She felt as if she had aged by a year or two at least -- all in the space of a few hours -- hours whose passage of time she was unable to

I thought how happy he must be, having been informed that the impasse had been broken. Now, if he were to hear that his son might end up as a hostage in Libya, this could push him over the edge. In his aged and sickly condition, this situation with its fluctuating fortunes, token progress and then reversals, could not be easily absorbed. It was hard enough on a person in a healthy condition. He was so far away. Would I ever see him again? Would I ever see my mother, my wife my brother, and everyone else again -- the deathly feelings of the previous night were flooding back to me. The last place on earth to which I wanted to go was Tripoli.

So far, no one on the plane had been able to detect my ethnic origins, but the prospect of being taken to Libya and becoming subject to Colonel Quadaffi's macabre sense of fun scared me. That is exactly what happened to the Air France hostages in 1976 when their plane was hijacked out of Tel Aviv to Entebbe. The Airbus made its first stop in Libya. The pattern was becoming clearer to me; little did I know just how strong the Syrian connection was in our case.

When Alamgir walked by, I asked him where we might be going.

"Libya."

My heart began to sink into my stomach again. I turned my head aside, wanting to throw up. I looked outside to steady myself. Syrian troops remained dug in around the aircraft.

The previous night, when we received the communique of the Government of Pakistan's agreement to meet most of Alamgir's demands (there were other details relating to the exchange of prisoners with ourselves), was the first time in eleven nights that I was able to get some meaningful rest. Until then, I had been unable to snatch more than a few hours of sleep at a time. In the entire period since we had left Karachi, this amounted to no more than a total of 20 hours of sleep, or three nights equivalent of my normal sleep. My body was summoning up the extra reserves it needed to get through this situation. If someone would have told me that in the next two hundred and forty hours I would be able to get so little sleep, the very prospect would have exhausted me. To be sure, I was functioning on

measure.

Gwynn, being unaware of the calls that were made the previous day from Robert McNamara to Kurt Waldheim, and he to Zia-ul-Haq, and in turn Zia-ul-Haq to Hafez al-Assad, believed that it was just good fortune and God's divine attention that had spared her husband. And indeed that may well have been the case because it was unclear -- and would always be so -- as to what precisely pushed Zia into action. No one could ask him, as six years later, in August 1987, Zia himself died in the crash of a Pakistani military plane, along with the United States Ambassador to Pakistan, Arnold Raphel, and several of Zia's senior military officers.

The hijacking crisis was far from over, as intricate details about the prisoner-hostage swap still needed to be worked out. The purpose of having Gwynn on the scene was in case her help would be needed in ferreting her husband away from the location. It was only because she had travelled overseas on many Bank missions that she was being sent to the staging ground to begin with. But since the final destination of the hostage plane was as yet unknown, itself depending on where the exchange of hostages and prisoners would take place, it was decided that Gwynn should wait in London for confirmation as to where she should next proceed. One thing was clear: she would not be allowed to travel to Libya by herself; even Damascus was considered questionable.

Later, as Gwynn was on board a British Airways plane enroute from Washington to London, she gave some thought to the moral question: was it right to yield to hijackers' demands? Naturally, from her personal perspective, Zia's succumbing to Alangir's conditions had made the difference between whether her husband lived or died, so the answer was straight-forward for her. But that didn't make it sit any easier with her from a moralistic point of view. Theodores had told Gwynn that the reason the Government of Pakistan had taken as long as eleven days to work out its position vis-a-vis the hijackers was because it remained fundamentally opposed to trading convicted criminals (not just political prisoners) for the lives of innocent hostages. These were not to be traded like some commodity. At an abstract level,

Gwynn supported the view that if one gives in to terrorism once, it could encourage similar acts. However, this was all fine in the world of the abstract, but when the life of one's family member was at stake, these high-minded propositions tended to crumble.

Gwynn wondered what had caused Zia to finally yield to the hijackers conditions in the end. From what she was able to piece together, based on Theodores' information and press accounts, it could have been any one of a combination of factors: the ordeal had already lasted eleven days, far longer than any other hijacking at that point; Zia was losing face the longer it lasted and would lose more support if additional deaths were to occur. The fallout from Tariq Rahim's death had been enormous in Pakistani public opinion. There was widespread clamoring for Zia to do something.

Yet, Zia was in a tight spot. The leaders of both Syria and Libya (Hafez al-Assad and Muammar al-Khaddhafi) had been closely aligned with Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and were outraged when Zia went ahead with the hanging. Khaddhafi and Ali Bhutto shared the dream of a Pan-Islamic movement to unite Muslim countries. Zia, on the other hand, talked about a Pan-Islamic movement, but so courted the West for arms and ammunition to help arm the Mujahaddin guerillas in Afghanistan and restock his army divisions that were stationed along the border with India's Jammu and Kashmir state, that the chance of forging a Pan-Islamic alliance with Pakistan at the epicenter was in effect lost.

Gwynn had a nagging worry that something unexpected, such as a botched SWAT operation with possible loss of life, could still occur aboard the PIA plane. Theodores had informed her that the Syrians had refused the Government of Pakistan's request to allow a Pakistani tactical unit into the country to carry out an operation to storm the plane by surprise. The Syrians had refused a request from the Government of Pakistan to mount a SWAT operation. Yet even at this late stage, the Pakistani government was considering how it might wrest control of the PIA plane away from the hijackers. This would require collaboration and logistical support from the Syrians. To date, there had been no evidence to indicate that the Syrians were willing to consider any such venture. In fact, the Syrian negotiators had

rejected Pakistan's request to bring in a specialized SWAT unit from Germany. Although Syrian troops were lying in wait alongside the plane, there was no indication that the authorities were willing to commit their men to launching a storming operation of any sorts.

Just who were these hijackers? Now that the worst part of the crisis appeared to be over (little did Gwynn know what more was in store for her), she found herself feeling curious as to what kind of person would seize a plane and endanger the lives of one hundred and fifty persons. From the contents of my radio transmission, the one that had caused quite a stir in Pakistan, Gwynn realized that I had some knowledge as to what kind of person Alamgir was, and what were his reasons for hijacking the plane. Gwynn told herself to be patient, to wait until later to satisfy her curiosity.

During the British Airways flight, Gwynn tried to steel herself but one of the flight attendants noticed her distress. Gwynn did not wish to discuss the situation with the attendant or anybody else. On departing the plane, in the bus that took the passengers to Terminal 4, a man was glancing at the morning's headlines about the hijacking.

"Isn't this whole thing terrible?" he said, pointing to the front page of the London Times in front of him. "They've even killed one person already."

The BA groundstaff woman leaned over and commiserated. Gwynn said nothing. On alighting the bus, Gwynn caught up with the woman in the corridor and touched her blue uniformed elbow.

"My husband's inside that plane, you know," she said bursting into tears for the first time in nearly two weeks.

Prior to this, Gwynn had held it all in so hard, so carefully. But there was something about being on British soil for her that moved her emotions uncontrollably. She was aware by now that I had claimed for myself British nationality on board the plane. For some reason, at that precise moment, the whole nationality aspect became vivid to her. She would not have predicted that it would have been in a nameless corridor in a Heathrow airport terminal building where she would have found herself giving

vent to her deepest emotions, but she knew that these things could never be fully predicted.

At first, the British Airways woman looked shocked, then turned around and threw her arms around Gwynn. Gwynn did the same, and two strangers hugged each other in comfort. Two strangers who shared a secret; and until a moment ago, two strangers to each other, who now embraced like best friends, coming to grips with what it meant to be trapped inside a plane for twelve days.

Gwynn went straight to her hotel in Knightsbridge; she was desperate for an update of developments aboard PK326, but she also dreaded the prospect of hearing them. She knew that at this critical stage, anything was still possible. She called the World Bank's London office -- no new telexes or messages had arrived. Next, she called Washington -- no word there either. She turned on the T.V. for the late afternoon ITV news. The broadcast mentioned that a second PIA plane thought to be carrying 54 persons who were to be swapped for the PK326 hostages, was on its way to Libya. Libya! Disturbed at this news, she called Theodores, who confirmed that the prisoner plane was indeed on its way to Tripoli. Would PK326 follow suit? The prospect alarmed both of them. They agreed to stay in close contact by telephone.

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On board we could only sit and wait ... and wait! A few hours went by. At noon, the Nigerian mullah conducted Friday's prayer session. He looked more at ease this time compared to the previous day's last prayers. I could now listen to his chanting with some pleasure. He laid out the same rug at his feet, a Bokhara design with the geometrically arrayed camel's foot. On this day, the rug symbolized life for me yesterday it was a red and black shadow of death.

Engineer Nadir was sitting on my right in the front row next to Captain Saeed Khan. Khan was sobbing. He told Nadir that Copilot Jounus should fly the plane if we were going to be on the move gain -

- that he could not handle it any longer. The killing of Tariq Rahim had so affected him, as had the recriminations that he received over the radio from the Pakistani negotiating team, who complained that Khan was too compliant with the hijackers had really got to him. How unjust, it seemed. he was the captain responsible for the well-being of his passengers; he had a great many worries and the Pakistani negotiating team was complaining about his attitude over the radio? They had even gone as far as to suggest that Younus should handle all transmissions and any further flying of the aircraft, should that prove necessary.

I felt sorry for Captain Saeed Khan. He was doing his best under enormous pressure. The fact that he had appeared to buckle under such pressure could have happened to anyone.

I asked Nadir what would be the next steps. He said that Alamgir was seeking a promise of political asylum for his comrades and himself in Libya, to where the prisoner plane had gone.

A few minutes later, Nadir and I were startled to see that under the clear Damascus moonlight an aircraft was coming in to land; the plane had the familiar green and white markings on its fuselage and the tail was lit up with the large PIA logo bathed in white light. The plane taxied to the other end of the runway. Nadir burst into a broad smile, tears streaming down his cheeks.

"I think that's the plane which is bringing the prisoners, inshallah, inshallah."

He leaned over to hug me, then bent down and kissed the floor. I too felt like kissing the floor but could not get out of my seat as Alamgir ordered me to sit down at that moment. Two Pakistani planes now sat on either end of the runway. Airport buses and military armed personnel carriers sped to the new arrival and surrounded it. Sirens blared, lights flashed and soldiers took up their positions. I could hear voices shouting over bullhorns.

Yet Alamgir looked most distressed. He appeared confused as to why this second Pakistani aircraft had just arrived here in Damascus. Nadir told me that Alamgir believed that the prisoner plane was in Tripoli by now and that we all would be going there. Originally, Colonel Quaddafi had offered

asylum to Alamgir but later recanted the offer. Whether it was the prospect of giving asylum to 55 persons, many of them convicted of serious crimes, or whether it was that Quaddafi simply changed his mind, as he was known to do often, no one knew. Apparently, when the pilot of the second Pakistani plane was told to change his flight plan, he immediately turned his aircraft around and headed for Athens. The change in direction could not have been more propitious -- it kept us out of Quaddafi's hands. Luckily, this happened while there was still enough fuel on board to make it back to Athens.

At nightfall, the evening BBC news was played to us over the radio:

"This is the British Broadcasting Service. Here is the news. First, the main points. The saga of Pakistan flight 326 continues. The hostages have not yet been released but in a development that was not known to the authorities at the time, the PIA flight carrying the persons who are to be exchanged with the hostages, landed in Damascus in the middle of last night. We do not know the reason why it did not go to Tripoli, contrary to what was first believed. Our correspondent in Islamabad reports it that it will be several days at least before things are expected to return to normal. Pakistan's officials are still weighing the likelihood that the hostages will be freed sometime soon. The Syrian authorities said that they are making arrangements for an exchange of the hostages with the freed prisoners. It is not known whether it will be individually or in small groups. Turning to other items ..."

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In London, Gwynn heard about the second plane's arrival in Damascus on the 11 o'clock news. She was overjoyed that it was not Tripoli after all. She called Jim Theodores, packed her bags, and caught a few hours sleep. In the morning she rode to Heathrow airport in a black London cab -- the leather interior had never smelled so good. She would remember that smell years later. By a stroke of good fortune, Syrian Air had a flight leaving for Damascus at 9:00 p.m. Still, her sense of relief would

not be complete until she would be able to meet up with me again. To her, it seemed as if a whole month had passed since that cold Saturday on February 28 when she had dropped me off at Dulles International Airport in the rolling meadows of Virginia.

"Take care of yourself," Gwynn had said -- a statement offered a million times a day all around the world to passengers. It took the wayward flight of PK326 to bring meaning of this phrase to me.

Word Count: 3816

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN
A NEW KIND OF DANGER

Our release was not what it appeared to be. The Syrians, under false pretenses, prolonged the crisis.

Day Thirteen: Saturday, March 14, Dawn, Damascus Runway

The pilot of a special Pakistan International Airlines flight with 54 prisoners on board was preparing to land in Damascus. He was exhausted, for he had just completed a circuitous route which had taken him from Islamabad to Aleppo, Syria, and then on to Libya. While he was over the Mediterranean Sea not far from the Libyan coast, Colonel Muḥammad al-Khaddāfi balked at the idea of granting asylum to the hijackers and refused permission for the planeload of Pakistani prisoners to land nearby Tripoli at Benghazi airport. So the plane turned back and headed for Athens. After refueling there, the pilot headed for Damascus.

In Aleppo three of the prisoners -- the most wanted and mysterious -- had departed the plane. The charge d'affaires of the Soviet Union's consulate was at the airport to greet these men. In local circles, he was believed to be a KGB man and his job at the airport that day was to ferret out of the plane three Pakistani men who had been serving long prison sentences for having been convicted of spying for the Soviet Union. One was a former navy officer and the other two were army men. The Soviet Union wanted to sequester these three spies so that they not be exposed to Western media. Therefore it was of the utmost importance to the Soviet Union that they not be allowed to fly onwards to Damascus.

When the local airport authorities boarded the plane at Aleppo they were shocked to learn that many of the 54 prisoners were chained to their seats. The hijackers had settled for 55 prisoners compared to the original 92 sought, but one of the 55 could not be found. As it turned out, some of the prisoners did not want to go into exile in Syria and had consequently resisted boarding the plane in Islamabad. The only way the army got them to go on board was to force them at gunpoint and to chain

them down to the armrests of the seats. Besides, this way they could not hijack this second PIA plane. Dealing with one such plane on the runway was more than enough; having two such planes hijacked on the runway at Damascus would be too much to deal with.

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When the Syrian Air Boeing-747 touched down from London, Gwynn saw the two PIA planes parked at either end of an unused runway. She could make out the green and white markings on the body of the planes and the PIA logo on the tails, but she could not tell which one was the hostage plane and which one the prisoner plane. For all she knew, as she gazed at one of them, the one furthest away, praying that I would be released soon, she may have been addressing her extra-sensory perception (ESP) messages to the wrong plane. Although the other plane was nearby, it seemed miles away and she wondered whether the ESP waves would find their target.

Gwynn passed through immigration fairly quickly.

"How long do you intend to stay in our country?" the immigration officer asked.

She felt like saying that this was up to some other Syrian officials and a few uninvited visitors, but she was not in the mood to get the words out. She still harbored a deep suspicion that things might not turn out well after all.

"A few days, perhaps a week."

After she completed the arrival procedures, she met her two contacts from the U. N. They then climbed the flight of stairs to the outdoor viewing area. Gwynn stared at the two PIA planes. Again, no one could tell her which plane was which, as if it were a state secret.

On descending to the arrival hall again, she was met by a Bank staff member who had been asked to help out. They soon found a taxi form the dozens lined up outside the airport and drove to the

Meridien Hotel in the center of Damascus. To Gwynn, it was frustrating to have arrived in Damascus and not to have been able to hang around at the airport, where she could have kept watch on the planes. Not that she could do anything to influence matters. Deposited in a ubiquitous international hotel with nothing to do but look at the television and telephone the few persons whose names Jim Theodores had supplied to her, she felt helpless again.

Gwynn called the Resident Representative of the UNDP to find out if he knew when the hostages would be released.

"Possibly tonight, possibly tomorrow; meanwhile, I suggest that you get some rest. There are some good shopping bazaars here. "

Rest? Shopping? Gwynn thought that the man had lost perspective.

Next she called the U.S. Embassy. She was told by the political charge d'affaires that, according to his information, the prisoners had to be checked over first and, only then, would the hostages be released. The sticking point was what to do with the hijackers.

"When will all this take place?" Gwynn asked.

"It could be tonight!" said the counsellor in an excited voice. "We have some people on that plane whom we need to see about as well."

See about! That was a strange comment, Gwynn thought. What could he have meant?

Feeling restless and worried, she paced around the bedroom. Syrian T.V. provided no further information in its brief English summary version and she was unable to understand the longer news broadcast that was broadcast in Arabic. She had little alternative but to just sit and wait.

"It feels so odd," she said to herself. "The two parts of our voyages -- mine and Jeffrey's -- previously some ten thousand miles apart, have now converged in Damascus. Yet I cannot even get close to those darn planes. And Jeffrey is still holed up inside one of the planes."

Little did Gwynn know that another cruel twist of fate was about to delay any reunion and

present new and ominous risks again.

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The sky had become dark gray. Thunder clouds loomed overhead. Alamgir was becoming nervous again. He stood up front, hands still on the trigger. He mumbled something to the effect that he did not trust the Pakistani negotiators. Eventually, he got word from the control tower that all of the prisoners had been released and had been taken to an unknown destination in Damascus. The Syrian negotiator, who identified himself as Brigadier General Mohammed Kholi assured Alamgir that this step had occurred. Consequently, the hijackers, or freedom fighters as he too called them, must release the hostages immediately and surrender their arms and ammunition.

Months after the hijacking I came across a photograph in TIME Magazine that appeared to show the prisoners bound in chains descending the steps of the plane. An enlargement of the photograph confirmed that the prisoners were still handcuffed at the time of their release from the plane. I would later find out that they had been handcuffed to the seats of the plane that brought them out of Pakistan.

Apparently, many of the prisoners did not want to go to Syria as they preferred to stay in Pakistan, even if it had to be in jail, compared to an uncertain existence as an exile in Syria. Some of them had not committed any crimes, or had no sentences, but were political prisoners. They expected to be released from jail at any time. Naturally, Alamgir had not consulted with them to see if they wanted to be included in the prisoner-hostage swap. To their surprise, they found themselves whisked away from their jails (many from Rawalpindi Central prison) and hurried onto a plane at Islamabad airport.

At the airport, the prisoners balked and the police had to force them onto the plane at gunpoint and chain them to the seats. The prisoners were transported out like chattel.

Not surprisingly, the authorities at Damascus airport were startled -- they had not expected to see freed prisoners still in chains, arriving obviously against their will. Given these circumstances, it took several hours to resolve a confusing situation at the doors of the prisoner plane. All of this delayed our release.

At 9:00 p.m. the activity around our aircraft picked up. Soon it became downright noisy. Compared to the eerie silence of most of the last two weeks, it was like sheer bedlam outside. Trucks, buses and jeeps converged on the aircraft on all sides and powerful searchlights shone through the cabin windows. There was no mistaking it this time, we were about to be freed.

Alamgir, Nasir Jamal, and Ali Butt started walking down the aisle and shaking everybody's hands. They still had not given us back our passports. I assumed that the crew had our passports. I started to think about all of the sorts of people who might be waiting for us in the terminal building -- press, Syrian government officials, Pakistani officials? The Bank had no office in Damascus. Sleep was not on my mind; Gwynn was, and I wanted to fly home as soon as possible.

Alamgir put his arms around some of the passengers -- no longer hostages -- and they did likewise to him. The elderly woman and her son bid a warm farewell to Alamgir -- the Stockholm Syndrome seemed to exist there. Alamgir and I shook hands awkwardly; I was happy that this was likely the last time that I would see him. Clymore repeated his offer that Alamgir should come see his ranch in California some day, in response to which a broad smile came over Alamgir's handsome face.

Alamgir and his two comrades were the first to get off the aircraft. They shook hands with tall Syrian official. Alamgir and his accomplices shook hands with a tall Syrian official (Brigadier General Mohammed Kholi) as if they were being congratulated. Shook hands? Being congratulated? What is this? Who is the aggressor and who is the victim? My mind raced around with the thought that the Syrian officials were in cahoots with the hijackers.

Alamgir stood in a defiant pose on the tarmac below. He looked like a man with a sense of

triumph. He had pulled off what the Economist magazine would call "the most successful hijacking in history." And it appeared that he was getting off scott free.

Since I was sitting up front, I was one of the first hostages to leave the plane. I picked up my briefcase, which miraculously had sat untouched for nearly two weeks. I walked down the mobile staircase. The glare of the search lights almost blinded me, being such a contrast to the dim light inside the plane. Clearly, my eyes would take some time to adapt.

As I got to the bottom of the stairs, someone threw a garland of flowers over my head and motioned me to the bus parked on the right side of the aircraft. It all felt wonderful, the fresh air, full of fumes nevertheless, and the night sky. I took a few paces and stretched my legs -- it felt as though I was walking in heaven.

All of the hostages were given garlands. As I walked by, beckoned by soldiers, I took one last look at the front of the Boeing 720-B. From the tarmac below, the cockpit looked majestic, its nose reaching to the moonlit sky. The cockpit: scene of the strangest encounter that I had experienced in my life.

By the staircase, some official-looking Westerners in dark suits stood around, pointing to this hostage and that. They wanted to get access to the three American hostages: Craig Clymore, Fred Hubbell, and Lawrence Mangum. Syrian soldiers thwarted their efforts and the three hostages joined us.

We were told to walk towards a bus that was parked nearby the front of the plane. I climbed aboard and walked to the middle to find a seat; a microphone was thrust through a window towards me. A reporter asked me what it was like to be in that plane for so long.

"It was three hundred hours of looking down a machine gun barrel!" I said -- a quote that was picked up and reprinted by Newsweek and the New York Daily News. The comment illustrated the images that were most on my mind and my subconscious process of counting every minute.

After having had this opportunity to convey my feelings to the outside world, I sat down. Fear

gripped me again. This was not an airport bus! It had wire caging over the windows and the seats were rock hard. There were no overhead lights above the seats. It looked just like a bus that transports prisoners to a prison. Something had gone awfully wrong. Other passengers filed in. Soon, two Syrian military soldiers carrying automatic rifles jumped on the bus. The door closed with a bang. Two other buses were on either side of us, also filled with P326 passengers. The drivers started the engines and the procession of three buses snaked their way out of the airport.

What the hell was going on? The Syrian soldiers would not talk. The buses picked up speed and drove towards downtown Damascus. It was a dark city, not one in which I would like to walk around at night. Just before getting to the city's outer limits, our driver turned right and sped down a highway.

We must have driven for about forty-five minutes when the driver pulled up at a large building with sentry posts and searchlights at each corner of the fence. We appeared to be at some military installation. Army jeeps were parked inside the compound, which included a small parade ground. Anxious-looking guards paced around. The bus came to a halt and we were quickly surrounded by a dozens of Syrian soldiers, all hugging automatic rifles. A uniformed doctor, his green army jacket sleeves showing below his white linen coat, climbed aboard our bus and asked us to please get down, and to bring our bags with us. Rather than being at some facility at the airport or at a hotel, where we should have been released, we were at a military hospital. The word hospital did not sound at all reassuring since it looked more like a detention camp than a place of medical service.

The Syrians had deceived us. They had brought us here under a false pretext; we had been told that we were being freed and we had been deceived into another form of detention.

CHAPTER NINETEEN
ESCAPE FROM A MURKY WORLD

I never got a feel for Damascus, other than being detained in the military hospital and a brief stay at a downtown hotel. My system resisted the new form of detention in which I found myself. However, for the first time in thirteen days, I was able to talk freely with my fellow ex-hostages. The benefits in terms of a mutual bonding and the general decompression were enormous for me, not that I was able to appreciate it at the time, as I was so angry at being detained in a mysterious and frightening place.

Day Fourteen: Sunday, March 15, 1981

In the hospital, we were herded into large wards and told to sit down on the beds, which were reasonably clean. Soon the Commander of the hospital, flanked by several Syrian soldiers and nurses in white uniforms, entered the ward. He told us that we were here for a medical check-up. First, we were to have a shower; afterwards, the doctors were supposed to come and see us. The entourage turned around and moved on to the next ward.

Showers -- the word was like music to my ears. Several of us dashed to the shower room and formed a line. When my turn came, I climbed under the running water and soaked... and soaked. The texture of the warm water running down my face, my chest, my legs, was exhilarating. I wanted to stand there forever, lapping it up, arms raised, furiously lathering my hair with soap suds (no shampoo) and scrubbing out all of the dirt from my pores. Three hundred soap suds, one for every hour I spent on that plane.

As I stood there virtually inhaling the water, I loved every second of it. No jacuzzi had ever felt so good. I was still scarred from the ordeal of the five-hour countdown for I found myself contrasting my good fortune of having water come out of my shower spout compared to the millions in Auschwitz and Buchenwald who found only deadly gas come out of their shower heads.

By, now dozens of ex-hostages were crowding into the shower room. The line disintegrated into a melee. The Syrian soldiers, looking uncertain about how to handle the mini-stampede, and unable to

communicate in either English or Urdu, resorted to raising their rifles and pointing them at the scrambling passengers. Order was restored instantly and the soldiers lowered their rifles.

I moved over to the sink to pick up one of the half dozen razors that had been laid out for our use. All of the razors appeared to have been used, but that did not deter me as I was desperate to have a shave (the risks of becoming HIV-positive as a result of using an infected razor were not known at the time).

It was 3:00 a.m. by the time I returned to the ward, only to find a nurse and doctor standing by my bed. They asked me my name, wrote it down and enquired about my general condition.

"A shower and a shave cures all ills," I said.

They made no mention of any medical checkup, which led me to suspect that we had been brought to this place only because we were still being punched around like a football as the governments negotiated on what to do with the prisoners and the hijackers, who appeared to have avoided detention for the time being.

It appeared to be pitch dark outside. A short while later, footsteps could be heard coming down the corridor. I walked a tall gentleman, South Asian in appearance with grey hair and a distinguished-looking moustache. He was accompanied by a shorter man, also South Asian, and four Syrian soldiers. The nurse who had written down our names stood a few paces behind. The group turned to me first.

The shorter man began: "Hello, I presume you are Mr. Balkind. I'm Ambassador Khan, Safraz Khan. I'm so happy to see you."

Pointing to the tall man next to him, he continued: "This is Major-General Rahim Khan, chairman of PIA. He's just arrived from Karachi to see for himself how you all fared and to find out anything you might know regarding how the incident occurred at the beginning. I mean, do you remember when you first saw the hijackers.?"

"In Karachi, at the airport, as it turned out. The leader, he bumped into me. I didn't think anything of it the time."

When did he take over the plane?

"Near Peshawar. He didn't want to be intercepted ..."

"How do you know that?"

"Because I talked to him in the cockpit."

"Oh, so you're the one! It was you who had to send that message over the radio. My government was surprised at some of the language used."

"I had no choice. Talking of choices, Mr. Ambassador, why are we being held here, against our will?"

"You're here to get medical checkups."

"If I may so, Mr. Ambassador, that's utter nonsense. You can see for yourself -- there are no medical checkups going on."

The Ambassador looked a mixture of embarrassed and angry at my outburst. He began to move on to the next person.

I found myself getting even more angry. Here we were, having been held hostage for thirteen days, not having known whether we would be alive or dead at the end of the ordeal, and having no means of communicating with our families, and the ambassador acts so blasé. If the Pakistanis or the Syrians were so worried about publicity, as appeared to be the case, they could have at least taken us to a private lounge in the airport and explained the next steps. There was no excuse in my mind for having been whisked away under armed guard and driven far outside Damascus, without even being asking what we wanted. After all, my heart was in a strong condition, but several older men were suffering from the stress. In fact, one of the elderly hostages had appeared to have the first stages of a cardiac arrest on the plane when we were in Kabul, according to what Captain Saeed Khan told me in the shower room. All

Alamgir had done was to request that the Red Cross come to the plane with an Afghan doctor, who checked out the ailing hostage -- no stethoscope; no blood pressure testing equipment. The doctor had given the hostage some blood pressure pills and left. The sick man had to remain on the plane for the entire ordeal.

The Ambassador did not look particularly concerned. After he had finished talking with the person next to me, I walked a couple of steps and deposited myself in his path.

"I have one last question sir: When are we going home?"

"In due course," the Ambassador replied without the faintest hint of an apology.

Then I lost my composure. "Mr. Ambassador, I'm medically fine. My 'tests' as you call them consisted of a shower and a shave and the nurse has said that there won't be any further tests necessary".

The Syrian nurse nodded. She obviously understood English.

I continued: "Mr. Ambassador, if you had to sit on a plane for nearly two weeks fraught with danger, what would be one of the first few things you would like to do once you were released?"

Ambassador Safraz Khan did not answer. Instead, he tried to pursue his first question.

"Mr. Balkind, please be patient. We are trying to find about this hijacking."

I wasn't going to be put off. Turning now to General Rahim Khan, thinking he might show more understanding, I repeated my question.

"I ... I guess that I would like to talk to my family," the general said.

"That's right, sir. Please can I be taken to a telephone"

"Impossible! This is a military installation".

"That may be so, but I did not come here voluntarily. I couldn't tell where we were headed."

"Sorry, no phone calls. You'll be going home with all the other hostages in a new PIA plane that is being brought up from Karachi especially to take the hostages back home. First, we plan to stop in Jeddah to pray to Allah for this happy liberation, and then you will all proceed to Islamabad."

"But I'm not a hostage anymore. Please stop treating me like one. I plan to go home as soon as possible. Not Jeddah!"

The red-faced Ambassador started to move on to the next person.

A PIA aide asked me: "What about your suitcase?"

I replied angrily "Please auction it!"

Perplexed, I sat down on the hospital bed, wondering why the world of officialdom appeared to give so little weight to an individual's concerns.

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In her room at the Meridien Hotel, Gwynn did not sleep all night. Fear gripped her again. She had no idea as to where the hostages had disappeared. All she had been told by the UNDP liaison officer was that for a brief few minutes the hostages were seen on the tarmac; the next moment, they had disappeared into three buses. Was there a darker purpose to the hostage release procedures, she wondered. The nightmare was resurfacing.

The telephone rang. The caller, the UNDP liaison officer again, stunned Gwynn by telling her that the PIA passengers had all been taken to a syrian military hospital. re the hostages were at this point. The American Embassy, as well as other interested parties namely, Pakistan, Sweden and Canada, were all trying to find out where the hostages had been taken. How could this have happened, she asked herself. She had been assured that the appropriate officials were going to be on the tarmac to greet the hostages and to bring them to their various destinations, presumably their embassies or in Gwynn's case the Meridian Hotel. She was asked to stay put in her hotel room until the location of the hostages was determined.

On early Sunday morning, Gwynn took a taxi to the UNDP offices. As she talked with the security liaison officer, she was struck by how little he appeared to know as to where Jeffrey and the other hostages were being held. She called the American embassy and sure enough, the charge de affaire informed Gwynn that the PK326 hostages were being held at a Syrian military facility for their own "safety" for the meantime. The officer gave Gwynn a number to call.

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I awoke from a deep slumber to find a soldier pulling on my arm. He told me to follow him, which I did after slipping off the blue pajamas and dressing quickly. In the hallway, he pointed to a phone whose receiver was off the hook, and said "Speak!"

I picked up the receiver and said hello.

"Hello, darling." It was Gwynn's voice on the other end. Gwynn!

She sounded so clear, as if she was speaking from a local phone; there was no international hiss of cable wires.

"Gwynn, darling, where are you?" Before she could answer, another Syrian soldier -- a more brutal-looking man -- burst in to the hallway and yanked the phone out of the wall. He told me to leave the room and go back to my bed.

"This place is a hospital... no calls, no speak!"

Didn't that sound familiar, I thought. All the soldier needed was a shalwar kamiz and a moustache. He escorted me back to the ward; I was seething.

Five minutes later I could hear the phone ringing again. Another soldier approached me and told me to follow him. Picking up the phone, I said: "Gwynn, is that you?"

Before I heard an answer, the commander of the hospital, who had greeted us on arrival walked up to me. An idea came to my mind.

"Gwynn," I said, "hang on, speak to the colonel here."

I tapped the officer on his arm. "Someone wants to talk to you, Colonel," I said.

The colonel asked me who it was.

"My wife."

He reluctantly picked up the phone and held it awkwardly. Letting out a deep growl, he said: "Who's it?"

"Gwynn Davies! I want you to know that you are holding my husband against his will. Unless you release him immediately, I'm going to report this to the Syrian Government, to the Ministry that I deal with here."

Good for Gwynn! She always knew what to say at the right moment.

The colonel coughed and sputtered the next words: "Your husband, maybe he go soon, maybe tomorrow, maybe Tuesday.

"Tuesday?? I want him out now!" Gwynn shouted.

"Not possible." The ashen-faced colonel passed me the phone. "Your wife, she's very angry."

"Do you blame her, Colonel?"

The colonel walked off without answering.

I returned to my hospital ward. Instead of returning to bed, I joined a group of fellow passengers, who were exchanging stories of various aspects of the hijacking. Each person had been visited by Ambassador Safraz Khan and Major-General Rahim Khan. They were especially flattered that the chairman of PIA had seen fit to travel all of the way to Damascus to extend his well wishes.

I learned several important and fascinating twists to the hijacking. First, my stretcher theory was correct -- General Rahim Khan confirmed that it was the belief of PIA and Karachi security managers that all of the weapons were stashed under the blankets of the so-called sick passenger. The fact that he departed the plane in Kabul had raised their suspicions, but they could do nothing to apprehend him as he went into hiding in Kabul.

The machine gun was a different matter. General Rahim Khan said that it was the government's belief that the mastermind behind the hijacking was none other than Murtaza Bhutto, son of the late Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and furthermore, it was the younger Bhutto who supplied the machine gun to the hijackers.

General Rahim Khan said that the Pakistani government was conducting an official investigation into all aspects of the hijacking. I made a mental note of this, to try and get a copy of that report later.

Another important aspect I learned in the conversations with passengers who had a chance talk to the crew was that the reason Captain Saeed Khan left the cockpit and Copilot Junaid Younus took over command of the aircraft on the eighth day soon after our arrival in Damascus was that the Pakistani negotiators considered Khan as being too compliant towards the hijackers by the Pakistani negotiators. His fever was seen as buckling under pressure. Captain Khan himself told me that on leaving Kabul he was worried that our plane might get shot down over Afghanistan or Iran and when he saw the Iranian jet on his starboard side, he nearly panicked. This factor and general lack of stamina forced the captain to hand over command of the plane to Copilot Younus on the eighth day.

Alamgir's allegation that there were CIA agents on board seemed, at first blush, to be the usual diatribe, but one of the Western hostages, Lawrence Mangum, upon hearing about my phone conversation with Gwynn, said: "Hey, guys, do you want to see how to get a secret message out of this building?"

He then took a cigarette, unwrapped the white paper long portion, carefully dropped the tobacco on the little table that we had, and he asked for a pen and paper. One of our group then produced the little paper in which Mangum proceeded to write a random message. He then folded the paper, surrounded it with the tobacco, pushed it onto the white cigarette paper that he had laid flat and proceeded to roll it up again. He used a bit of saliva to get it to stick to the filter.

Mangum continued: "If someone visits you today in hospital, for example one of our ambassadors, wherever they may be, you ask if he wants a cigarette, and even if he doesn't, you push this in his hand and you tell him to unwrap it when he is outside.

"Pretty neat," I whistled. "Where did you learn that?"

"In the CIA when I was working for the agency in North Africa in the seventies".

Those listening seemed impressed. In our group sat Clymore, Mangum, Eriksson, and myself. Fred Hubbell was sitting in another group. We started to joke around, about airlines and acronyms: PIA stood for please inform Allah, Air France for "Air Chance" and TWA for the world's worst airline (at the time). Pan Am did not have an unflattering code name, other than for its troubled record.

In on of the most bizarre stories of our incident -- one that I was not aware of until hearing about in the hospital -- an elderly passenger found himself using a bathroom on the plane immediately after a hijacker. On looking around for the toilet roll, the lights went out. He wrapped his fingers around what he thought was the roll and to his shock, it was a grenade -- apparently left behind by the previous user, the hijacker. The frightened passenger, not knowing how to handle grenade, ran out from the bathroom and handed the grenade back to the hijacker. The hijacker -- the thin ne with the cruel sneer -- did not even change his expression to show the slightest sign of gratitude or embarrassment. he Just shoved the elderly man and told him to get back to his seat.

One of the hostages derided that passenger's actions. Others said that it was fine for him to be critical, but would he have preferred for the grenade to have exploded form improper handling and risk

killing dozens of people? People tried not to be judgmental and concentrated on seeing the lighter side of things.

That is, except for the feelings about the hijackers. On this, the passengers did not hide their feelings and used the sharpest of language.

"They are dogs" one passenger shouted --they killed poor Tariq Rahim in the most brutal manner possible. Major General Rahim Khan had told this passenger that Tariq Rahim had died as a result of his skull being crushed from being tossed out of the plane head first. Passengers went pale at hearing this. They used the foulest of language to describe their true feelings about the hijackers -- not the disguised emotions which they had paraded around in the plane for thirteen days as an exercise in game theory, and as a necessary tactic of survival. The Stockholm Syndrome had gone forever.

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Towards the late afternoon, the Colonel came into the ward, asked me to get my few things together, and whispered that we were going. He allowed me a few moments to say goodbye to my new friends. Naturally, there was a fair amount of surprise that I was the first to be going. I felt quite emotional. I bid farewell to the PIA crew and thanked them profusely for all they had done, all of the men that is, since it seemed that Naila had either been taken direct from the plane to some hotel, or she was somewhere else in the hospital, so I could not thank her personally.

I asked Captain Saeed Khan and Copilot Younus to convey my deepest gratitude to Naila, especially my admiration for her brave decision to stay with the ordeal through to the end. I hugged Purser Javed Bhatti, whose forehead showed no sign of the large bump. Then, I hugged Engineer Nadir, my interpreter. I waved at Craig Clymore, Fred Hubbell, and Lawrence Mangum, wondering if I would

ever see them again. They looked green with envy that I was departing and I felt awkward about this small privilege that I had been granted.

I picked up my briefcase with its secret still tucked safely inside. Next, I followed the colonel down the hall. We walked quickly through the hospital, stepped into a small private vehicle belonging to the colonel, who drove off in a cloud of brown dust. The fact that it was the colonel who was driving and that it was his personal vehicle (and not a military jeep) indicated that he was doing this on the sly. I only hoped that he would not land in trouble for it. We talked casually. He spoke in broken English. He told me about his family, about how difficult it was, always seeming to be in a struggle with neighboring countries, and that one day he hoped that there would be peace. He said, "You know, we are not far from the Golan Heights." I did not tell him about my ethnic origins, lest he turn the car around and head back towards the hospital.

When we arrived at the Meridien Hotel lobby, Gwynn was downstairs. My world had taken a joyful turn again. We embraced as we had never done before, with the colonel looking on. He had a smile on his face, the first one I had seen in nearly twenty four hours. Gwynn thanked the Colonel profusely, as I did. The good turn that the Colonel had done for us was as unexpected as it was welcome. We waved goodbye and his vehicle disappeared. I won't tell you the details of what it was like for Gwynn and I to be together again. I will tell you, however, that the desire to leave Damascus and escape from this murky world was overwhelming. We were soon to be on our way in another plane again, but not before the last twist in the murky world started coming into focus.

Gwynn and I talked quickly about our next steps. We wanted to get out of Damascus immediately, so there was no time to exchange stories. She had already done her homework. The first flight to Europe was with Yugoslavia Airways (JAT) on which she had already made reservations. The plane was due to leave at six a.m. This would be exactly fourteen days to the hour (with the time difference) from my checked-in at Karachi Airport for PK 326. The difficulty was how to get out of the

Meridian Hotel without being accosted by the hordes of newspaper reporters who were gathered downstairs in the lobby. Fortunately, since Gwynn keeps her maiden name, the reporters were foiled in their attempts to find me.

Midnight was approaching. Gwynn called her contact at the U.S. embassy and asked him about transport to get to the airport. He offered to send a car.

"I will send someone for you at three a.m. He will knock on your door."

Grateful for the courtesy and services of the American government, which was being extended solely on account of Gwynn's nationality (and fortitude), I tried to get some rest.

There was a knock at the door. I stayed out of sight, while Gwynn pulled the safety latch and opened it a little. I heard her talking and then a tall man fellow walked through the darkened entrance to the room. It was safe to switch on the lights: It was Craig Clymore, to my surprise. After I introduced Craig to Gwynn, I asked him how he had managed to get out of the hospital so quickly, since earlier in the day the Syrian soldiers and the nurse had to restrain him when he was acting belligerently. I did not think that he would be one of the first to be released.

Craig said that he and Fred Hubbell were driven into Damascus by U.S. officials, who had at last been successful in getting into the hospital. Craig then looked sheepish and said that he had a problem. I asked him what was up. He hauled out a letter with the United States seal on it. Gwynn and I read it.

"Dear Mr. Craig Richard Clymore,

You are asked to submit your passport immediately to the U.S. Embassy and report there...."

The letter went on with further details and it referred to a charge of a grand felony. We asked Peter what was this all about. "A couple of grams of hashish," he said, "nothing much to worry about". Gwynn informed him that the word felony is not normally used for minor things. Was there something

larger than he, Craig, didn't want to tell us about. He said "no!" and then he asked us for our advice on a small dilemma that he was facing. Dan Rather, or one of the other TV network anchormen, was wanting the foreign hostages to fly on a chartered plane to Amman, Jordan, to do a taped interview and he really wanted to go and do this, despite the complication of this letter from the U.S. Government. In fact, he said, the U.S. TV Networks were looking for me and had already found the mid-Westerner. What should he do about this interview request? Naturally, Gwynn and I were amazed. Here was a guy, who was under a felony charge which could have serious consequences, and he was worrying about TV interviews.

We suggested to Craig that he not do the interview and concentrate on getting legal advice. He thanked us and left the room soon. Surprisingly, Craig did the interview.

The last tap of the door occurred when Fred came by to bid his say goodbye. In the hospital I had told him about the sequence of events that had led to his wife Charlotte being released from Kabul (that the officials in the control tower had stipulated that her release was a condition of refuelling). Fred was unaware that I had informed the control tower that an American woman was still on board and when he heard that I had done this, he was deeply grateful. When Fred and I shook hands and hugged each other farewell that night in the Meridien Hotel, the warmth of the feeling between us left a deep impression on me, and also on Gwynn.

By two-thirty a.m. we were packed and ready. We then received a phone call from the desk downstairs that a car was waiting for us. Gwynn took the precaution of slipping a coat over my head as we descended in the service elevator and out of the rear door of the hotel. A U.S. Embassy official and a driver were waiting in a station wagon parked nearby. The trip to the airport was certainly different to the one I had experienced just the night before in that awful caged bus. Events were moving very rapidly at this point. When we arrived at the airport, Gwynn and I thanked our gracious U.S. official for

his assistance. We were indeed, deeply grateful, for without their assistance, our departure could have been greatly delayed or complicated yet again.

At the check-in counter, things were quite busy. The JAT ground manager, with whom Gwynn had engaged in several phone conversations while I was still on my way from the hospital to hotel, greeted us with a warm smile and asked for my ticket, so that he could rewrite the routing. Of course, I still had it with me. He asked to look at my passport to check if I had the necessary visas for entry into JFK Airport. The request to hand over my passport was so different to the last time I had to do that. My, how the world had changed for me. I got tearful, this time with joy. Gwynn too was filled with emotion.

The flight from Damascus to Belgrade was uneventful. The JAT manager was terrific. He had given us six seats to ourselves and had kept the rows behind and in front empty, in order to increase our privacy. As we took off from Damascus, the sun was rising. I looked through the cabin window to see if I could recognize the gray hospital or the configuration of vehicles around it that I had remembered. It was impossible, since many of the buildings looked similar. Needless to say, I have never visited Damascus again.

At Belgrade Airport, the JAT staff were again tremendously helpful. There was one funny incident, however. When we were about to board the aircraft, I noticed that a man was carrying what appeared to be a rifle in his carry-on bag. I went over to the JAT supervisor and asked him to come and have a look. He did. It was a child's toy model of a hunting rifle. I didn't feel embarrassed. The JAT supervisor was aware of what I had recently been through, in fact he too assigned Gwynn and I about ten seats in the aircraft, this time a DC10. The flight to JFK was uneventful, and for the first time in nearly fifteen days, I got several hours of uninterrupted and relaxed sleep. It certainly felt good, almost blissful.

At home, Gwynn and I saw a picture on T.V. of the PK326 hostages coming down the staircase in front of the plane. I saw myself coming down the staircase in a "Live shot". The rest of the details -- yellow balloons and my welcome home party -- was to become a regular feature of hostage-return scenes that were played out in America and the United Kingdom throughout the nineteen-eighties and early nineteen-nineties, with the saga of the Beirut hostages.

One of the best aspects of my homecoming was for me to meet and then get to know Jim Theodores, the wonderfully warm and humorous man who had steered the Bank through the hijacking crisis. It was clear to me that because of his beyond-the-call-of-duty efforts -- and those of Martijn Pajmans, Ernie Stern, David Hopper, Malcolm Rowat and a host of other Bank officials too numerous to mention -- I had been able to emerge from the crisis unscathed. These officials had kept clear minds and a sound determination to oversee this crisis through its every detail, twist and turn. Gwynn shared my views entirely in this regard, which is no small aspect, given the different sense of crisis a spouse feels than any other person connected to a hostage.

Gwynn and I took a short holiday, which lost its appeal when we read about a Garuda Indonesian Airways hijacking (an airline on which Gwynn had flown a great amount) and the shooting of Ronald Reagan by James Hinckley, Jr., all in the same week. Reagan was shot only blocks from our house, which made the world of terrorists and psychotics all the more terrifying. It was both real and surreal - in one strange package.

PART TWO

THIRTEEN YEARS IN RECONSTRUCTING THE STORY



CHAPTER TWENTY
STRANDS OF THE FABRIC

During the few years immediately after my hijacking, I remained curious about four questions: What was the eventual fate of Alamgir and his two accomplices? What happened to the 54 prisoners who were exchanged for us? Who really was behind the hijacking of PK326? And what was the fate of Craig Clymore, not that this question was as central as the others? To some extent, the story was like strands of a fabric that were still being woven together.

In 1984, some three years after the hijacking, a key incident occurred. Unexpectedly, Junaid Younus, the copilot of PK326, called me one day. He was on a visit to Washington, ostensibly to do some sightseeing on one of his days off in between flying PIA's Boeing-747 on the Karachi-London-New York run. However, the real purpose of his visit was to help prepare a manual for PISA on methods to deal with terrorism -- both hijackings and sabotage. Younus was drawing on the U.S. State Department's library resources (the same one that I would consult years later) and meeting with officials in the State Department's office of Counter-Terrorism.

It was good to be able to see Younus over lunch. We recounted numerous stories and impressions of our experience, as filtered through having reflected on it for three years. Younus told me that after I had left the Syrian military hospital, some two days later all of the Pakistani hostages were taken out of the hospital and escorted back onto another PIA plane that had arrived from Pakistan to transport them home. Their trip took them via Jeddah, just as Ambassador Safraz Khan had indicated, and the ex-hostages got a chance to communicate their prayers to Allah from Mecca itself.

I was surprised to learn that Captain Saeed Khan came under sharp criticism from the Pakistani government and from PIA management for having been too compliant in responding to the hijackers' demands and in essence for having buckled under pressure. It was Copilot Younus, rather than Captain

Khan, who received the medal for bravery from the Government. At the ceremony that was held in Islamabad on July 20, 1981, Major-General Rahim Khan handed out the President of Pakistan's commendation certificates, as well as cash awards amounting to Rs. 10,0000 (about five hundred U.S. dollars) to five persons – Copilot Younus, Naila Raza, Farzana Sharif, and two of the Pakistani passengers (Dr. M. Salem, who had aided a sick hostage, and Begum Anwar Jameel, the elderly woman who had remained in the plane throughout the ordeal). The fact that Saeed Khan received no commendation revealed how PIA felt about the captain's buckling under pressure.

I was dismayed that PIA had found it necessary to treat Captain Saeed Khan in such a harsh manner. The captain was ill with fever during the flight and the fact that he showed tension was quite natural, it seemed. I asked Younus what was Captain Khan supposed to have done on board that would have met PIA's and the Government's favor better?

Younus responded that he didn't know, but clearly Saeed Khan had been caught between different sets of emotions, which made it difficult for him to act rationally.

"You know, as a result of our Kabul-Damascus incident and other ones more recently, security at all of Pakistan's airports has been beefed up." Younus proclaimed.

"That's good, but I don't plan to test it, Junaid," I said.

So what happened to Alamgir in the end,?" I asked.

"Oh he returned to Kabul, along with the other two hijackers and the 54 prisoners."

I was later to learn from a report in the International Herald Tribune that cited a BBC news summary item which mentioned that an immigration official in India noticed that on board a Syrian Air plane which was bound for Kabul and had stopped at New Delhi International Airport were 57 male passenger with Syrian passports that contained consecutive serial numbers. After a check was made, it was learned that the passengers were the 54 prisoners and the three hijackers. Airport official held the plane up for about six hours but then allowed it to continue to Kabul.

In allowing this, the Government of India failed in its obligations to apprehend the hijackers even though the original incident did not occur on its soil. India, as a signatory country to the international treaties on Anti-Hijacking Measures, was obliged to take such action, but it chose not to do so.

Younus recounted an incident in 1976 when Pakistan returned to India an Indian Airlines aircraft that had been hijacked to Lahore by two Sikhs.

I asked Younus whether a SWAT operation was seriously considered in our incident to which he confirmed that the Government of Pakistan did try to obtain assistance from a special German anti-terrorism unit but the Syrian Government refused the request.

It was revealing to see the Syrians double role in the matter. They did help to negotiate the exchange of hostages and prisoners and they dealt efficiently with the two Pakistani planes that were parked on opposite sides of the Damascus airport runways. Younus told me that we were sequestered in the hospital in Damascus because while Pakistan was seeking the extradition of the hijackers they did not want the hostages to leave Syria.

So what happened to Alamgir in the end?" I asked.

"Oh, he's dead!" Younus said. "He had a fight with one of those prisoners whom he had tried so hard to bring out of Pakistan. It seems that the prisoner did not wish to leave Pakistan and resented having been handcuffed to the seat of the plane that flew him and the others to Damascus. One day back in Kabul Alamgir shot the ex-prisoner. For this, the Afghan authorities arrested Alamgir, tried him, and executed him. So Alamgir hijacks a plane, liberates a man, and ends up killing him later. For this, he gets executed in return. Poetic justice, one might argue.

Younus then asked me if I ever got my suitcase back.

"Oh yes, our Resident Representative in Islamabad, a Mr. Siebeck, he arranged to send it back to me. My small short-wave radio inside the suitcase was still intact."

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Regarding the question as to who was behind the hijacking of PK326, there were two related puzzling questions: Who masterminded or planned the hijacking, and who ultimately was controlling events in Kabul and in Damascus. Several press articles appeared in the following years which provided additional information.

On March 8, 1981 the following article appeared in *The MUSLIM* Newspaper: entitled:

"A Kabul-Supported Terrorist Plan"

ISLAMABAD, March 7, 1981: "Maj. Gen. Rahim Khan, Secretary-General of Defence, said here today the hijacking of the PIA Boeing was the result of an organized terrorist plan supported by certain elements in collusion with the Kabul authorities."

..."Addressing a Press conference three hours before the 3:30 p.m. (Pakistan time) deadline fixed by the hijackers, he said Pakistan was prepared to look into the third demand, relating to the release of 92 prisoners."

..."Pakistan was ready, as already conveyed to the hijackers, to consider cases where leniency was possible but there would be no submission to the blackmail, warned the Secretary-General."

... "The Defence Secretary-General said that during the control tower contacts the chief hijacker, who was apparently covered by two others, had said that they were under the orders of Murtaza Bhutto, whom they called the Secretary-General of the Al-Zulfikar group."

..."Gen. Rahim said the involvement of Murtaza was also clear from the fact that immediately after the plane landed he came to the airport, embraced the hijackers and said 'these are our people'..."

The Muslim newspaper continued: ... **"Killing:** It has now come to light that Tariq Rahim was killed by the hijacker because he had recognized Murtaza Bhutto when the latter came to greet the hijackers at Kabul Airport on March 2. Tariq Rahim, who has left behind a widow and a two-year-old

daughter, was the son of late Gen. (Retd) Qazi A. Rahim, one time GOC in East Pakistan and chairman of the Burma Shell Co."

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On March 15, 1981 the *London Sunday Times* carried an article entitled:

"Son of Bhutto: The Man Behind the Air Pirates"

This was an extensive article and the best documented one of all the many written on the PK326 hijacking. The gist of the article was that Murtaza Bhutto, after the hanging his father on April 4, 1979, formed the People's Liberation Army (PLA), which had as one of its goals the aim of overthrowing the government of President Zia Ul-Haq. Murtaza, after graduating from Harvard University in 1978, attended Oxford University's Christchurch College, where he studied politics and international relations. After dropping out of Oxford after his father was hanged in April 1979, he reportedly spent several weeks in Damascus and in Libya, where he met Colonel Khadhaffi.

At the end of 1979, Murtaza Bhutto took up residence in a small bungalow in Kabul on a patch of ground close to the former Royal Palace, which had become the official residence of Afghanistan's President Babrak Karmal and also close to the headquarters of the Soviet advisors. Then began a series of related incidents: on December 12, 1979, a Pakistani army unit was ambushed at Nowshera, midway between Rawalpindi and Peshawar; a month later, a goods train was derailed at Multan; on September 12, 1980, Murtaza Bhutto issued a nine page hand-written statement, in which he warned that the attacks so far were merely a foretaste of things to come. He said that the PLA regarded the national airline, PIA, as a legitimate target and he appealed to his countrymen not to travel on it. Apparently, according to a reporter from the *London Sunday Times*, a few days before our flight the security procedures were intensified at Karachi airport. They held up a London-bound DC-10 but found nothing suspicious aboard the plane.

As it turned out, on March 2, 1982 the officials were on high alert but they did not detect anything unusual about PK326 -- the passengers or the baggage in the hold. They thought nothing of the stretcher incident and few were aware of it.

On Sunday, September 27, 1981 the following article appeared in the *International Herald Tribune* weekend edition:

Bhutto's Son: My Men Were Responsible for Attack

NEW DELHI - "Murtaza Bhutto, son of executed Pakistani Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, was quoted yesterday as saying that his men were responsible for an attack in which the judge who sentenced his father to death was wounded.

A Pakistani politician and his driver were killed in the attack in Lahore, Pakistan, on Friday.

The British Broadcasting Corporation's correspondent in New Delhi, Mark Tully, told Reuters that Murtaza Bhutto telephoned him on September 26, 1981 to say that his Al-Zulfikar Organization was responsible for the attack. Tully said Murtaza's voice was clearly recognizable but declined to say where the call came from.

Al-Zulfikar is a Kabul-based group, which also claimed responsibility for the hijacking of a Pakistani airliner to Kabul in March 1981.

Tully said Murtaza told him that his group would pursue the wounded judge, Maulvi Mushtaq Hussain, to the end of the world for his role in convicting Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.

Murtaza was quoted as saying that two people -- a Dr. Mussadiq and a Mr. Iqbal -- carried out the attack in which Chaudhury Zahur Elahi, a former labor minister and a leading supporter of Pakistan's military government, was killed. Elahi had requested as a gift the pen that Zia used to sign the execution order of Ali Bhutto, and this act led to him being targeted for ambush. Judge Hussein was the former Chief Justice of the Lahore High Court and he had sentenced Zulfikar Ali Bhutto to death; as a result, he was targeted for ambush six months later.

Tully went on to say that Murtaza Bhutto had claimed that the attack had been made on Labor Minister Elahi and Justice Hussein because of the roles that they had played in the death of his father. A third person in the ambushed car at the time, M.A. Rehman, was the special public prosecutor in the Bhutto case, but he escaped injury.

A Pakistani newspaper reported on Saturday that it had received a call from an organization calling itself "Black Cat," which claimed responsibility for the attack." - Reuters.

In a key statement in Benazir's Bhutto's autobiography entitled: *Daughter of the East* (Simon and Schuster, 1989, page 223), she says: "The regime resurrected Al-Zulfikar as the source for this latest violence, and the arrests began. Mir murtaza didn't help when, ^hte day after the assassination, he took credit for it in a BBC interview in the name of Al-Zulfikar. A debate about the attack might have exposed the immoral role Elahi had played in the death of my father; instead, all the attention was focused on routing out the supposed members of Al-Zulfikar."

Thus, Benazir Bhutto herself does not go as far as to claim that it was impossible for her brother to have been involved.

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In a story by Jon Kimche for the Montreal Gazette published on March 22, 1981 (entitled "Why the Soviets Cashed in on a Hijack") Kimche alleged that the Soviet Union in effect controlled events, not only in Kabul, but also in Damascus. Kimche claimed that among the prisoners were three Soviet spies, whom the Kremlin wanted returned to Soviet soil. They had been convicted in 1980 of passing defense secrets on to Moscow. Apparently, the second PIA plane that my wife Gwynn had seen on the tarmac in Damascus had first stopped in Aleppo, a smaller town in Syria to off-load the three spies. A Soviet official, believed to have been working for the KGB met the plane in Aleppo and took the three spies away.

Kimche moreover alleged that all communications between the Syrian negotiators and Alamgir were conducted by Brigadier Al-Kholi, the chief of Syrian military intelligence, who had taken command of the situation at the control tower. This information matched with what I had been told in the Damascus hospital. On the plane during the last four days of our hijacking I had heard Brigadier Al-Kholi's voice over the radio, communicating back and forth with Alamgir. Moreover, it was Kholi who shook Alamgir's hands, as captured in a picture in the front page of the New York Times on Monday, March 16, 1981.

I was never to forget the name of Brigadier Kholi. On October 25, 1986, a full five-and-a half years later, I was reading an article in the Washington Post about the trial of a young Jordanian, Nezar Hindawi, in which he was convicted of trying to plant a bomb aboard an El Al plane at London Heathrow airport. In the confession that Hindawi had given to the British police, he alleged that he had been hired in Damascus by Luitenant-Colonel Haitem Saeed, second in command of the Syrian Air Force Intelligence. Hindawi claimed that Colonel Saeed introduced him to his superior, Intelligence Chief General Mohammed Kholi.

Hindawi was given an official Syrian passport in a false name, and was paid \$12,000 to place the bomb on the El Al plane via his unsuspecting Irish girlfriend who was pregnant at the time, possibly with his own child, as an attack against Israel. In the actual trial, Hindawi in his defense repudiated his earlier confession and said that it had been largely fabricated by the British police who were threatening to turn him over to Israel. Hindawi claimed that the bomb had in fact been planted in his girlfriend's bag by Mossad, the arm of the Israeli secret intelligence and that they had tipped off the El Al security personnel.

The judge believed the prosecution's version, based on Hindawi's earlier confession, and he was sentenced to 45 years in prison. The British Government was so incensed by the alleged complicity of the Syrian Government that it severed diplomatic relations with Syria over the incident and expelled the

Syrian Ambassador, Loutof Haydar. President Reagan, in a sign of displeasure and support for Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's action, temporarily recalled its Ambassador to Syria, William Eagleton Jr.

So a key person in our incident -- Brigadier-General Al-Kholi, Chief of Syrian Military intelligence, was alleged to have been involved in the attempted sabotage of an El Al flight some five years later.

The U.S. State Department was most unhappy about the role of the Soviet Union in our incident. A spokesman, William J. Dyess, asserted that the Soviets and the Afghan authorities helped the hijackers by supplying them with machine guns. "They arrived with pistols, they left with machine guns," Dyess said. On the day after that briefing, Secretary of State Alexander Haig said that the Soviets had to accept some responsibility for the world's longest hijacking.

On August 17, 1988, General Zia-ul-Haq and U.S. Ambassador Arnold Raphel were killed in the crash of a C-5 transport plane belonging to the Pakistani air force. Investigators could not find any evidence of sabotage, although this was the belief of most foreign officials. The formal inquiries conducted by both the Pakistani and United States governments were inconclusive.

On the question of who planned the hijacking of PK326, the picture remained clouded until November 1993 when the Government of Pakistan (with Benazir Bhutto at the helm) acting on a court order issued by the Sindh High Court in Karachi arrested Murtaza Bhutto and charged him with masterminding the hijacking of PK326 in March 1981. They also charged Murtaza bhutto with being responsible for the order to execute Tariq Rahim on board.

Murtaza Bhutto has since confirmed that he came to the back of the plane while we were in Kabul but he claims that the purpose was for him to plead with the hijackers to lay down their arms and surrender. Murtaza Bhutto claims that, without his pleas, we would never have been freed. He forgets to mention that this ultimate step took place in Damacus, not in Kabul, and it occurred a full six days after he visited our plane in Kabul to talk with Alamgir. Presumably, the Sindh High Court will one day

render judgement on the veracity of these claims and counter-assertions. The stakes are high -- they could not be higher, as the charges against Murtaza Bhutto carry the death penalty.

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Regarding the fate of Craig Richard Clymore, the January 1992 issue of the *Los Angeles Magazine* featured a story entitled: "The Hero who got a Smuggler's Welcome." The story recounted the strange events that occurred in Damascus after Clymore had been released from the hospital where we had all been held on the outskirts of the city. The article shows several photographs of Clymore in Damascus -- he is in handcuffs being escorted by federal drug agents. Another picture shows Clymore at JFK airport and a third picture shows him outside the offices of the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) in Manhattan, New York. Pictures of Clymore as a young boy in Orange County, Southern California and at his college graduation are also shown. The reporter, Brett Howard, pieced together the following sequence of events:

About six weeks prior to our hijacking, a friend of Clymore's was apprehended at JFK airport in New York after alighting from a flight from Karachi. The woman was carrying a condom filled with hashish oil inside her vagina; the condom had burst, causing her to go into shock. Police were summoned and the woman was first given emergency medical attention, and then she was arrested.

The New York police alerted the federal drug agents, who began to tail Clymore and his fellow travelers, including Diane Moseman, Craig Clymore's girlfriend. As it turned out, a few weeks prior to the flight of PK326, officials of Lufthansa Airlines informed officials in the United States that eight tickets had been purchased in February 1981 in Karachi and only four persons, including Craig Clymore, had taken the plane out of Karachi. These four passengers were spotted getting off the plane in New York by federal drug enforcement officials, who then went on the lookout for the other four. The federal agents

were able to spot three more of the ring arriving at JFK several days later. Another agent, tracked down Diane Moseman in Laguna Hills, California, and arrested her on drug trafficking charges. She was then taken back to the East Coast, where she agreed to cooperate with the authorities, giving them details of boyfriend Craig's operations. This information led to a grand jury indictment being issued in California on February 20, 1981 and a warrant for Clymore's arrest. The warrant was issued ten days before Craig found himself trapped on the PIA flight. Clymore's trip to Peshawar apparently was in search of high-grade heroin, which he and his couriers planned to stuff into condoms and the heels of hoes (the Little Big Foot corporation) and transport the powder to New York.

Clymore's indictment was listed in Interpol records at the time of the hijacking. Soon the DEA officials were also tracking the strange odyssey of our flight and they were on hand in Damascus to seize him after obtaining an order for his extradition from Syria. The Los Angeles magazine reporter Brett Howard claimed that Clymore was duped into signing a letter that waived his right to remain in Syria and Clymore was taken back to New York, accompanied by the same DEA agent who had tracked down Diane Moseman in California. Clymore surrendered his passport, just as the letter that he had shown Gwynn and me that night in the Meridien Hotel had instructed him to do.

At Clymore's arraignment on April 13, 1981, the U.S. attorney presented an eight-count indictment, which alleged that Clymore operated a criminal enterprise involving drug trafficking. If convicted, the charges were punishable by life imprisonment without parole. The prosecution's case rested on evidence that Clymore employed a network of 40 couriers, who made as many as 15 trips to India, Pakistan, West Germany, the Netherlands and the United States to smuggle drugs. The couriers were apparently paid \$8,000 for each liter of hashish oil and \$13,000 for each pound of heroin. The couriers would usually swallow condoms filled with heroin or hashish oil and disembowel the contents on arrival at their destination points after going through customs.

U.S. District Judge, Thomas Platt, of the Brooklyn Federal Court set Clymore's bail at \$10

million, a signal that he considered the case to be a major one. Apparently, President Reagan -- and as a result the Department of Justice -- had been putting the squeeze on the DEA to come up with a major drug bust. The prosecution claimed that Craig Richard Clymore's case was such a proceeding.

At the trial, in order to avoid life imprisonment, Craig Clymore took a plea bargain. Craig Clymore was represented by a court-appointed lawyer (a prominent New York lawyer, Ivan Fisher). The elder Clymores had enough resources to hire a lawyer for their son but chose not to do so.

The trial was brief. Craig Clymore received a severe sentence - - twenty-four years in prison, with the possibility of parole after ten years. However, that step had still to be decided by his trial judge at the time of publication of the *Los Angeles Magazine* article.

Ivan Fisher was stunned by the severity of the sentence for "a first-time offender." In contrast, none of Clymore's five fellow defendants received a jail sentence. Naturally, Clymore's parents were shocked by the verdict.

And so, one of the strangest episodes within the PK326 incident itself came to a close.

CHAPTER TWENTY ONE
THE AFTERMATH

Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome (PTSS) is a condition that can confront someone who has come close to being killed in a war, a terrorist attack, a severe mugging, or any other close-to-death situation. Rape victims have acute forms of PTSS to overcome, as both the body and the mind have been invaded. In our case, Alamgir invaded people's minds, and took the life of one person; each hostage had to deal with the after-effects in his own way.

Throughout the eighties I eschewed the psychological route in dealing with the PK326 aftermath. I was the tough guy -- I didn't need any of those long sessions with a psychologist working out my feelings about having come close to being killed. I continued to visit countries, some more dangerous than Pakistan, and I continued to fly 50,000 miles a year. It was as if nothing unusual had happened to me.

Then some strange things started to happen. The experts believe that PTSS can strike a person immediately after an incident; or it can strike ten, or even twenty years or more after the original incident; or it may never strike at all. Each person is different and reacts differently to such incidents. Often he is reacting at a subconscious level, his mind and body going through the routine that is expected of him by others, or the routine that he expects of himself.

And that's what I did -- until the night of May 22, 1991. After I had my dream subsequent to hearing about -- and seeing the grisly images of -- Rajiv Gandhi's assassination, a certain force was unleashed inside me. It took the form of a renewed fascination with the PK326 story, especially the allegations about the role of Murtaza Bhutto. At that time (May 1991), Benazir Bhutto had just been ousted from her first stint as Prime Minister.

Prior to my Gandhian dream, I had experienced several murder dreams before. However, in those dreams, usually things were about to happen, and more often than not, I would wake up. In the dream

after Gandhi's assassination, it was the first time that I saw -- and felt in a sense -- my body explode, and saw images of shrapnel spread all over the room. Few knew about my thought processes; even I did not know the extent, which took its form in a curious fascination that grew within me regarding all aspects of the PK326 story, and its aftermath concerning the outcome for the main participants. I therefore began to research the story, both from the perspective of having been a participant and as a retrospective viewer. In this way, I began to put together the missing pieces of the puzzle.

First, the all-important psychological aspects came to interest me more than they had ever done before. Psychologists have established through empirical studies that once the first major violent dream occurs after an original incident -- again this can occur a long time after the incident (fifty years after is considered unlikely) ~~after an incident~~, the mind starts a process of a random walk whereby it dreams selective aspects of the original incident, but usually not the entire incident.

In a sense, one can consider the mind as a filing cabinet, in which certain images are stored. By day, one manages to keep a tight lock on this cabinet, and it remains closed. But late at night, things are quite different. It as if someone has left the lock on the cabinet open, leaving the files free to pop out in a random fashion. Sherlock Holmes compared the mind to an attic, which needs to be cleaned out from time to time. The question for me was the extent to which I had cleaned Alamgir out? Two more dreams occurred to indicate that I had not done so.

Dream One -- "The Man from Munich"

July 22, 1992 was a hot, sultry evening in Washington, a good time to stay in and watch the Summer Olympics that were being broadcast from Barcelona. I flicked the dial away from the track events and tuned into a documentary on the Public Broadcasting Service channel. The PBS narrator was interviewing the daughter of the Israeli trainer who had been killed in the 1972 Munich Olympics and she was asked about her feelings twenty years later. Her father and nine athletes were slain by members of the organization known as Black September. The PBS program started with some footage of the ten

Israeli hostages crouching below a hooded terrorist, who was standing on a balcony overlooking the street of the housing village where the athletes were staying.

The daughter of the former Israeli trainer commented that the world goes on living as if the event that was so critical in her life never happened. Even the people living in the housing village years later were unaware that ten Israelis died in those buildings. Naturally, the real estate agents did not go out of their way to publicize that fact.

"How short is the world's memory!" the daughter of the slain Israeli trainer commented.

That night I dreamt that the hooded man on the balcony was about to shoot me. I woke up, and went to inspect my porch outside.

As I returned to the bedroom, I couldn't help but reflect on how similar were my feelings. ^{Just} the day before I had talked to a colleague who was about to depart for Pakistan the next day. He did not know that I had once been hijacked in a flight in Pakistan, nor should he have had to know this. But what did surprise me is that he was totally unaware that Karachi had been confronted with numerous incidents.

On September 5, 1986 in one of the most ludicrous lapses of security that had occurred at any airport in the world, Pan Am's flight 73 plane was attacked on the ground by ^{four} ~~three~~ hijackers working for Abu Nidal's group, it was subsequently learnt. Twenty passengers were killed in a shootout between security forces and the hijackers within the first twenty-four hours of the aborted hijacking. One of the passengers was shot in the back while he tried (successfully, it turned out) to protect the life of his wife; the man was maimed for life. In 1993, the man's wife told me (I had tracked her down through a mutual contact) that when she boarded the plane initially, the person who took her boarding pass at the foot of the stairs turned out to be one of the hijackers. If that was the case, this would have had to have constituted an unprecedented degree of collusion between groundstaff and terrorists -- or in the least, it represented shocking negligence on the part of the airport staff, or Pan Am, or both.

At some level, I did expect that my colleague should have been aware of these lapses ⁱⁿ at security

at Karachi airport, but at another level there was no more reason for him to know this than the next person. And few people knew about the lapse in security in our flight attributable to the incident involving the "sick man" on the stretcher.

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Dream Two: "Up Against a Wall"

This dream was brief and it occurred on a flight. We were flying at night across the Pacific in a Boeing-747 of one of the U.S. carriers. I had fallen asleep after watching Harrison Ford run around in *The Fugitive*.

I dreamt of guns and pistol shots. All of a sudden, a red brick wall protruded out of the white, billowed clouds ahead. The pilot had no chance to bank our plane away from the brick wall. Nothing was recognizable after that.

Reality One

When New York's World Trade Center was bombed in 1992, I -- like millions of others -- had to contend with the images on T.V; others had to contend with walking down 92 flights of smoke-filled stairs. Because of my personal experience, I reacted to this incident differently than most of the people I knew. I was both angry and shocked, and felt as if I was inside that shattered building.

The symptoms of PTSS were growing.

Reality Two

On another trans-Pacific flight, the sun had set as we crossed the international dateline. A brilliant orange hue merged into a deep blue horizon. The curvature of the earth lay miles below. I drifted off to sleep, and woke up in darkness. On this occasion, it was bothering me greatly that we were flying at night -- I had started to worry that we were more likely crash at night than in the day, even though

the statistics show there is no more reason why a plane would crash at night than in the day. Weather is the great variable, not sunlight -- or the lack of it. Yet, I kept on thinking about that night flight that Alamgir insisted upon, when we left Kabul and whether it was Captain Kahn or Copilot Younus who in fact sat at the helm. Conflicting articles and personal recounts left that episode uncertain. As I sat in the front of the Boeing 747 some ten ~~above~~^{years} later, it began to bother me that I could not see the pilot's cabin. A burning desire gripped me -- I had to see that we indeed had pilots sitting up front, that the plane was not on automatic pilot. So I asked the flight purser whether I could change my seat to ~~up~~ the upstairs section so that I could see the door to the pilot's cabin, not that I was going to do anything to it. The purser ushered me upstairs. When I sat down, a sense of relaxation swept over me.

PTSS was growing ... and I came to deal with it in some unusual ways. One of these was the "H-Walk" which I invented for myself in 1986 soon after the bungled attempt by the Jordanian Hindawi to blow up the El al plane at London Heathrow Airport. At my request, Jim Theodores, passed onto the British MI-5 personnel certain information that I had been keeping on Brigadier Kholi's role in negotiating the end to our hijacking. Hindawi alleged that it was Kholi who was the key contact man in Syria behind the failed attempt to sabotage the El Al aircraft.

My "H-walk" consisted of a stroll down the entire length of a plane soon after takeoff, during which I would try and spot a potential hijacker. This I would do soon after the captain had turned off the seat belt sign. In my walk, I would look at every passenger carefully, trying to scrutinize the faces to see if I could spot a potential hijacker, a potential Alamgir.

One of these situations occurred while I was flying several years ago from Frankfurt to Ankara, Turkey on a Lufthansa Boeing-737. I found myself sitting next to a passenger who I thought looked "suspect". I became apprehensive. The man had a long moustache and talked loudly with his colleagues, gesticulating vividly with his hands in a fashion that reminded me of Alamgir. While I was waiting in the aisle to use the toilet, I noticed that the passenger took out from his briefcase a small, neatly wrapped

package, which he then placed carefully in the overhead shelf above his head. When no one was looking during the darkness of the movie, I got up, opened the overhead bin and lifted the package to feel its weight. It was not heavy. I concluded that it probably did not have any metal inside since it almost certainly would have had to pass through . After all, had not the package already passed through the X-Ray machine at JFK airport? There was no ticking sounds, so it was unlikely to contain a bomb inside, unless it was made with that light-weight Czechoslovakian plastic called Semtex, which is suspected as being the material used in the PAN AM Lockerbie bombing. I returned to my seat, thinking that this man looked very suspicious and I was thinking of asking the Lufthansa stewardesses to do a check. But what if I was to be proven wrong? I decided not to rope the crew into my private, imaginary world and anyway we were already descending toward Ankara airport.

On arrival at Esenbogan airport outside of Ankara, to my mortification all of the passengers were kept waiting to disembark while "my shady friend" descended to a **full military honor guard** and stiff salutes on the tarmac. He then proceeded to hand over the "suspected package" to a fully decorated colonel who was standing in front of his khaki-clad troops. The colonel then proceeded to unwrap the package and I strained my eyes to get a glimpse of what was inside -- it was metal, which was now glistening in the sun. Only it was a set of shining medals of honor that had probably been acquired at Westpoint!

My mistake in wrongly suspecting a Turkish military officer seemed so ludicrous in retrospect. However, I was not to be blamed. Rather than wearing a freshly pressed officer's uniform, "my suspect" had on a crumpled, old suit, which had several missing buttons and curled up lapels. Also, he was unshaven. How was I to know that he was not from the underground world, but rather from the elite of Turkey's military.

So I came to deal with PTSS in the best way I knew how -- to write about the events surrounding

the PK326 story. I had to know who was behind our hijacking and whether it was true that Alamgir had been executed in Kabul, as Copilot Younus had told me. In my search, the veracity of the allegations about Murtaza Bhutto's purported role in our hijacking intrigued me.

As I pursued these matters, I became gripped by the notion of violence. Certain places that I had visited over the years appeared to have a pervasive undertone of violence. I had walked the mean ~~streets~~ streets, sometimes with the protection of local officials themselves guarded by police or soldiers. I had walked on the dusty streets of Johannesburg's Soweto township, the narrow, winding streets of Bogota's poorer districts, and the northeast section of Washington, D.C., a neighborhood that I would not visit unless in a locked car. When I was in the more dangerous cities in the Third World, such as the Trenchtown neighborhood in Kingston, Jamaica, or Mandaluyong in Manila, or the shanty-town sections of Bombay, I would ask to be accompanied by Government officials, who would bring along some local police officers as protection.

But it took an aircraft and three armed bandits for me to really feel the touch of violence. And as the years went by, that is how I saw it -- they were bandits! Alamgir and his two accomplices had stolen a plane, abducted 148 hostages and raped their minds. My anger started to rise again. The need to know what had really happened in the end to Alamgir, Nasir Jamal and Ali Butt became a compulsion for me.

Other than a few articles that appeared in the Pakistani press in 1981 about Alamgir, I had little to go on. Published information and internal information that I obtained under the Freedom for Information Act (FOIA), an Act of the United States Congress that allows people to file requests for declassified information from agencies such as the CIA, and the Defense Department, corroborated what I knew already; that Salamullah Khan Tippu, or alias Alamgir had been a science student at Jinnah college of Karachi university; and that his accomplice, Nasir Jamal and Ali Butt were also students of Karachi University.

In August 1993 I came across a key article in a Pakistani newsmagazine The Friday Times (FT). Mak Lodhi reporting for the TFT claimed that ~~the~~ General Zia-ul-Haq's government had planned to put on trial Murtaza Bhutto and his late brother Shahnawaz Bhutto 'in absentia' but that they refrained from putting it to test at the court, even though the proceedings were held at a special military court. According to the Challan (the indictment sheet in Pakistan) dated October 10, 1981 (seven months after the hijacking), ten persons were charged with planning or carrying out terrorism associated with the hijacking:

1. Salamullah Khan alias Tippu, alias Alamgir
2. Nasir Jamal, alias Rizwan
3. Arshad Al Khan, alias Ali Butt
4. Muhammad Ayub Malik
5. Abdul Nasir Baluch
6. Muhammad Essa
7. Rasool Bux
8. Saifullah Khalid, alias Sain
9. Mir Murtaza Bhutto
10. Mir Shahnawaz Bhutto

Judgement was handed down on November 11, 1984 (more than three years after the hijacking). Under the verdict, Muhammad Ayub Malik, Abdul Nasir Baluch, Muhammad Essa, and Saifullah Khalid (alias Sain) were given the death sentence. Rasool Bux was given 14 years hard labor. The convicted defendants petitioned for mercy and the Chief Martial Law Administrator commuted the death sentences of three of them -- Malik, Essa, and Saiffullah Khan. No judgement was rendered against Murtaza or Shahnawaz Bhutto and the office of Pakistan's Federal investigation Agency (FIA) considered having the

charges dropped against them, according to the TFT report. The Government upheld the death sentence of Abdul Nasir Baluch.

In Benazir Bhutto's autobiography (Daughter of Destiny, page 262) she says; "the PPP leader at the Karachi Steel mill, Nasser Baloach (slightly different spelling, same person) was being tried with four co-defendants in Karachi on the false charge of complicity in the hijacking, a charge which could result in the death sentence. Typical of Zia's military justice, few people in or out of Pakistan even knew the trial was taking place, or what, if any was the evidence against the accused."

I continued to follow events of the Bhuttos, though not with any more interest than any other foreigner. I was aware that in December 1987 Benazir Bhutto married Asif Ali Zardari, a businessman from Karachi. They were married in a large ceremony at 70 Clifton on December 18, 1987.

In August 1988 Zia was killed in the crash of an air force transport plane. In October the Pakistan People's Party won the elections and on December 1, 1988, Benazir Bhutto became the first female prime minister of a Muslim country.

In August 1993, I came across an interview which Murtaza Bhutto gave in Damascus. This was the first time he commented on the hijacking since his conversation with Mark Tully of the BBC in September 1981. In the interview, published in the Pakistani magazine "Newline", reporter Mohammed Hanif asked Murtaza Bhutto several questions on the political situation and on his life as an exile in Syria. Four questions that Hanif asked had a bearing on the hijacking and its aftermath.

Question No. 1: "Do you take responsibility for hijacking the PIA plane and killing Major Tariq Rahim, one-time military secretary to your father?"

Murtaza Bhutto answered: "I have said from the very first day that I had no prior knowledge of the hijacking. I found out only after it had happened. And the people who did the hijacking were associated with Al Zulfikar. But at the time hijacking took place, you were confronted with a country of a hundred million, which had been hijacked by the regime. My options were limited. I couldn't climb

the stairs, slap the commandos, drag them down the stairs and hand them over to the Afghan authorities. I had to convince them and cajole them. I immediately set about convincing them to release the women and children, and the women and children were released the next day. Then the hijackers said what are we getting in return? The Pakistani government was making promises and canceling them by the hour. I got the old people released. Tariq Rahim tried to overpower the commandos out of foolishness, and got killed. I certainly did not order his execution. Afterwards I was responsible for getting all the passengers released; nobody credits me with that. They had wired the whole plane from nose to tail with explosives. I convinced them to dismantle all those. This nobody mentions."

So, as incredible as it seemed, Murtaza Bhutto had confirmed what I and the other passengers on the plane -- not to mention the crew -- knew all along; that Murtaza Bhutto was said to have come to the back of the plane. Rumor had been replaced by confirmation from Murtaza Bhutto himself. Bhutto's mother, Begum Nusrat Bhutto in November 1993 also confirmed that her son had visited the plane. Murtaza Bhutto's story, however, is that he came to plead with the hijackers to lay down their arms and he claims that they did this because of his intervention. What Murtaza Bhutto conveniently omits to mention is that the laying down of arms took place in another country -- Syria and not Afghanistan -- and it did not happen until a whole week after Murtaza Bhutto visited the plane in Kabul.

Now the Government at the time of the hijacking alleged through a Press conference given by Major-General Rahim Khan that Murtaza Bhutto actually boarded then plane in Kabul and flew with us up to Damascus. During that four hour flight, I was not allowed out of my seat so I did not see Bhutto, if indeed he flew with us. Nevertheless, this is something the crew would know and is presumably part of the pending legal case against Murtaza Bhutto.

The second key question that the Newline reporter, Hanif, asked of Murtaza Bhutto was the following:

"Was Salamullah Tippu your man? How and why was he killed?"

Bhutto's answered: "He disappeared. Some people say that Pakistani intelligence agencies had blackmailed him by arresting his parents and they were asking him to create problems for the organization."

Hanif's third question dealt with the circumstances behind the killing of Shahnawaz Bhutto in France:

"Was your brother Shahnawaz killed through a conspiracy or did he commit suicide?"

Murtaza Bhutto answered: "Of course it wasn't a suicide; he was assassinated. There was a violent struggle in the room. His body bore marks from head^{to}toe, tables were turned around, chairs were broken. We don't know who did it, how they did it, who was infiltrated. But it was a break-in and he was poisoned. How they injected the poison, whether they put it on a handkerchief and forced it down his throat, I don't know. The police feel they could have cracked the case but it became a political matter. An Iranian diplomat was hauled up in the Iran's embassy in France, and the Iranians had arrested some French diplomats. Zia intervened to get the problem resolved. He made some deal and so they hushed up the case."

Then came the next question about which there^{had} been much speculation:

"Was the Al-Zulfikar Organization responsible for Zia's death?"

Bhutto answered: "I don't think so."

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October 1993 ushered in a new area in Pakistani politics. In the national elections held on October 6, 1993, the Pakistan People's Party won the largest number of seats (86) in the National Assembly and two weeks later the members of the Upper and Lower Houses voted 121-74 to elect Benazir Bhutto as Prime Minister over her rival, Nawaz Sharif, leader of the Muslim League. Murtaza Bhutto, who was living in Damascus, Syria, at the time, was elected to the Sindh Provincial Assembly.

The events leading up to these elections were among the most fascinating in Pakistan's attempts to establish a democracy. At issue was a long-simmering conflict between the President (who is Commander-in-Chief in Pakistan) and the elected Prime Minister (who is the Commander-in-Chief in most other countries that have parliamentary systems of government). The Pakistan Constitution gives the President the right to dismiss the Prime Minister if there is sufficient grounds of misconduct and corruption. In August 1990, President Ghulam Ishaq Khan had dismissed Benazir Bhutto after less than two years in office in her first stint as Prime Minister; in April 1993, he repeated the action in regard to Nawaz Sharif's Muslim League government.

After Sharif's removal, the Pakistan Supreme Court in a unanimous decision invalidated the President's order and restored Sharif to power (in the case of Benazir Bhutto's dismissal in September 1990, the Court was not asked to render judgement on the validity of the Presidential ouster). In May 1993, the army brokered a deal whereby both President Ghulam Ishaq Khan and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif resigned and new elections were called. The key step in mounting these elections was the transfer of power to an interim government led by Moeen Qureshi, a retired Senior Vice President of the World Bank. During his brief tenure as Prime Minister (May-October 1993), Moeen Qureshi's government put through a wide-ranging economic reform program and, with the help of the army, oversaw the October elections. These elections were widely considered to have been among the most open and fair in Pakistan's history. Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's wheel had turned a full circle.

Yet a challenge to ^{Benazir's} the authority came from an unexpected source -- her mother and brother. Soon after the elections, and while Murtaza Bhutto was still in Damascus, Begum Nusrat Bhutto and Murtaza Bhutto's supporters announced that Murtaza Bhutto was the legal heir to his father's property (the family estate at Larkana, Sindh) and that he was the rightful heir to the political dynasty. These claims were widely regarded as preposterous and sexist. But Murtaza Bhutto's supporters were not dissuaded. In January 1994 on the day of the sixtieth anniversary of Ali Bhutto's birth, Benazir Bhutto was kneeling

beside the grave of her father. At that moment, hundreds of Murtaza Bhutto supporters broke into the family compound and tried to move towards the grave site. The police opened fire on the supporters, who included in their midst Begum ^{Nusrat} Bhutto. One of the supporters was killed and several injured. Begum Nusrat Bhutto began to compare her daughter to the dictator Zia. The feud between the Bhuttos had reached new proportions. And it is interesting that the first break in the relationship between Benazir Bhutto and her brother occurred as a result of the hijacking.

So what is my interest in all of this? None other than I have a compulsion to know who was really behind the hijacking of PK326? Was it Murtaza Bhutto, as alleged by the Sindh High Court in the indictment handed down in November when the Court issued the warrant for Murtaza Bhutto's arrest, or was he innocent and the attempt to charge him with this act a clumsy form of discrediting him after the event? At the time of writing this last aftermath, Murtaza Bhutto remained in jail in Karachi awaiting trial on charges that he masterminded the hijacking of the PIA plane in March 1981; that he gave the order for Tariq Rahim to be killed; and that he was responsible ordering the ambush of the car carrying Labor Minister Elahi, who was killed, and Justice Maulvi Mushtaq Hussein in Lahore in September 1981.

Will justice be done in the end? Will the truth in the matter ever be proven one way or the other?

From my point of view -- someone who sat in that plane for thirteen days, who witnessed most of the incidents that took place on board, and who had first hand contact with the lead hijacker, it seems that: were it not for the fact that Murtaza Bhutto called Mark Tully of the BBC in September 1981 to take "credit" for these actions (and his calling of Tully is not in dispute); were it not for the fact that dozens of eye witnesses saw Tariq Rahim being dragged out of his seat, and be beaten and shot (he may have lunged at the hijackers as a last desperate move, but he certainly did not try to overpower them as Murtaza Bhutto alleges); and were it not for the fact that Major General Rahim Khan told us in the Damascus hospital that Murtaza Bhutto had written a letter months before our hijacking threatening to hijack on of the PIA planes -- were it not for all of this, not to mention the depositions of the PK326

crew, then Murtaza Bhutto could be expected to wage a spirited defense. And so the matter rests with the Sindh High Court, while the public waits ... and waits for judgement. Insh' Allah!

One inescapable conclusion continues to nag me. If an airline or an airport has received a credible threat, I believe that the officials in charge of those organizations have a moral responsibility to inform the passengers of the flight in question that a threat has been received and warning them that they fly a their own risk. This can be done in a discrete manner to those passengers holding reservations on that flight. A general announcement would not be made so as to discourage hoaxes. This is a sensitive matter and as many arguments against choosing such a course of action can be found (giving in to blackmail) as can be put forward in favor of the disclosure argument. This lack of disclosure was one of the factors that caused a federal judge in New York to find the defunct Pan Am airline guilty of negligence when it failed to warn the passengers of Flight 103 that crashed over Lockerbie, Scotland in December 1988 (the U.S. State Department did warn its employees not to fly through Frankfurt in December 1988 because a threat had been uncovered through the espionage network; the threat was against all U.S. carriers flying through Germany). The other factor was that Pan Am failed to match the baggage list with the passenger list. It turned out that a suitcase which had been checked into a flight in Malta was transferred onto PA103 in Frankfurt, even though there was no passenger to claim the suitcase. Investigators were able to prove that the bomb was inside that suitcase, and that it had been checked into the Malta flight by one of the two Libyans now wanted for extradition to the United States (or Scotland) to stand trial, something which Colonel Kadhaffi continues to resist.

In our PIA incident in 1981, the authorities at Karachi Airport were alerted to the threat that a PIA plane might be hijacked in those weeks and they searched the wrong plane -- a London-bound DC-10 instead of our domestic flight.

EPILOGUE: ON THE TRAIL OF THE STORY

In researching the story, first I got hold of the full passenger list, which contained all 148 names of the passengers and crew. Among these were Sallamulah Khan Tippu, Nasir Jamal and Ali Butt --the three hijackers.

Next, I found my photographs take inside the plane, which helped me to identify the key persons even though thirteen years had elapsed. I stared long and hard at those faces -- faces in the crowd, which became magnified for me. I had no photo of Tariq Rahim, though I came across a press clipping on him and his family. Dying at age thirty four inside a dark plane was not ~~the way~~ the way General Quazi Rahim envisaged his son would end up.

Within the story, several questions fascinated me: was Zulfikar Ali Bhutto guilty as charged for the murder of the politician Kasuri? Did Tariq Rahim really turn in state evidence in Bhutto's trial as Alamgir had alleged? What was the true role of Murtaza Bhutto in this hijacking?

On the last question, I did not see Murtaza Bhutto, so I cannot say whether he was there or not. But ~~regarding~~ his statement about the circumstances of Tariq Rahim's killing are directly at odds with what I and three other hostages have already stated to officials. Both Clymore in a press interview in Damascus and Deborah Leighton Weisner in an account given to the Resident Representative of the UNDP in Kabul, Mr. Bonev, said that Tariq Rahim had been dragged out of his seat, taken to the front of the plane and was first beaten and then shot. If he tried to struggle in any way, it was not because he foolishly tried to overpower the hijackers as alleged by Murtaza Bhutto, but because it was his last desperate act before being executed.

As I went through my articles and researched several books, I started to network with other people who could inform me about terrorism more generally and hijackings in particular. Professor Peter St. John at the Center for Counter-Terrorism in Winnipeg, Manitoba,, Canada was an excellent source.

He invited me to deliver a lecture to his class on "Perspectives of a Hostage".

I also networked with other hostages; one such hostage was caught in a shootout aboard a Pan AM Boeing-747 on Karachi runway in 1986. Her husband was maimed for life when he threw himself on top of her to protect her from an advancing terrorist. The terrorist tried to shoot him in the back but as his jacket had slipped down, they ended up hitting him in his legs instead. The woman told me some amazing things. For example, when she had to board the aircraft prior to departure, the person to whom she gave her boarding card at the foot of the staircase turned out to be one of the hijackers. Moreover, when they jumped out of the plane onto one of the escape chutes and ran across the tarmac, police kept on firing towards them. Also, the airport authorities dealt with the freed hostages so gruffly that she thought that there was some collusion between the hijackers and the airport staff, a view supported by the fact that the hijacker posed as a ground staff member when collecting the boarding cards (the authorities had to be aware of what was transpiring).

I spoke with Bunsei Sato in Tokyo, the Japanese ex-Vice minister of Transport, who substituted himself into a JAL hijacking. Through these conversations, a pattern of what hijackers do and what they don't do emerged.

Regarding suggestions for surviving such an incident, the expert Peter St. John lists fourteen practical suggestions, such as avoiding eye contact with the hijackers. I have a few of my own:

- (i) Be clear in your mind as to what and how much you want to divulge about the passport/nationality issue. If you are on a domestic flight, you do not have to hand over any travel documents because you could have left these in the place in which you were staying at the departing city. I never took that option with Alamgir and maybe it would have been better. But maybe it wouldn't have been, because he may have then proceeded to try and search my briefcase. That clearly for me was the worst option;
- (ii) I agree that where possible, you should avoid eye contact with the terrorists hijackers so that you

blend with everyone else. Easier said than done.

- (iii) You might wish to try and shield your identity. Tariq Rahim tried this in vain by hiding his wedding ring, but it did not help him;
- (iv) Do not take sleeping pills as you need to be alert at all times, especially if a SWAT unit come blazing through the doors.
- (v) You can try to make approaches to the hijackers but the risks are high. Feigning illness does not help much.
- (vi) Know the layout of your plane and get a feeling if possible as to who the hijackers are and what are their conditions. Understanding the context of the situation will help you to get through it.
- (vii) See your loved ones as soon as possible after the event, and get back into your own surroundings.

There are many moral dilemmas to face, one being is it right for governments around the world to negotiate with terrorists? And should the lives of convicted criminals be swapped for the lives of innocent hostages. At an abstract level, I am attracted to a "hard-line" stand, as was the Israeli government for many years. But that approach does not always work, as has been amply demonstrated in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and other places. At a personal level, when one's life -- or that of a family member -- is at stake, a non-compromising stand is difficult to accept. In our crisis, eleven days elapsed before General Zia-ul-Haq capitulated and it was not because he was pressured into doing so by anyone else.

Benjamin Netanyahu, the former Foreign Minister of Israel and Ambassador to the United Nations under the former Likud Government once commented: "I know about terrorism -- my brother died when he led the raid on Entebbe in 1976 to free the hijacked hostages."

Some things do not change much!

April 1994

CHRONOLOGY OF SOME MAJOR HIJACKINGS

- July 23, 1973 In one of the first well-known international incidents, a Japanese jumbo jet was hijacked to Benghazi airport, Tripoli, Libya by the Japanese Red Army and the aircraft was blown up. However, all of the hostages were first freed after about four days on the plane.
- August 15, 1973 A chartered Arab airliner was hijacked to Israel. Security guards apprehended the four hijackers and the plane continued on its route.
- November 21, 1973 A British Airways VC-10 aircraft with 43 persons on board was hijacked to Tunis. The four hijackers were released and the 43 hostages were exchanged for two Palestinians who were flown to Tunis from a jail in the Netherlands.
- December 1973 A Lufthansa Boeing 737 was hijacked from Rome to Kuwait. Thirty one people were killed in the incident. Thereafter, the German government developed a well-known capacity for SWAT (Special Weapons Against Terrorism) operations as a result of this incident, as well as its own struggle to combat the Bader-Meinhoff gang, who had launched a wave of kidnappings against prominent German businessmen. The same was occurring in Italy at the time, the most prominent of which was the abduction and killing of Prime Minister Adolfo Moro. Alitalia (the national airline) too became a target of later hijackings.
- December 1973 A Swissair flight was hijacked from Colombo to Karachi by a single Pakistani passenger. Security staff were able to apprehend the hijacker and no passengers were injured.
- December 26, 1973 A Canadian tried to hijack a Air India Jumbo Jet, but he was overpowered.
- March 2, 1975 An Iraqi Airways plane was hijacked to Teheran. The plane was sent back, but not before one of the three hijackers was shot.
- April 19, 1975 A Philippine airlines DC-8 was hijacked by three Filipinos and the plane made an emergency landing in Karachi as it was low on fuel. The aircraft was on its way on a flight from Bangkok to Benghazi airport, Libya. Libya granted the hijackers asylum.
- September 14, 1975 In San Jose, California, police shot and killed an armed person who tried to hijack a Boeing-727.

- January 4, 1976 An aircraft that was bound from Manila, in the Philippines to Osaka, Japan was hijacked. The flight had originated in Bangkok. Philippine security officials apprehended the two hijackers.
- March 27, 1976 A Malaysian airlines plane was hijacked in the Sabah province of Malaysia. The three hijackers were apprehended.
- May 22, 1976 In the Zamboanga province of the Philippines four hijackers commandeered a Philippines Airlines plane. They were killed and eight of the 90 hostages died on board when a grenade went off in the cockpit and the plane caught fire.
- May 1, 1976 A lone Turkish terrorist surrendered to French police after seizing a Turkhava (Turkish Airlines) flight bound for Paris. None of the 250 persons were injured and the DC-10 was not damaged.
- June 26, 1976 In what is one of the most famous hijackings, an Air France Airbus with 226 people on board was hijacked to Libya while on a flight from Tel Aviv to Paris. The hijackers were demanding the release of 53 prisoners from Israel. The plane then went on to Entebbe, Uganda and the hostages were finally freed after a raid by the Israeli military. The book entitled "Raid on Entebbe" portrays the full account, as well as a movie on the event. Dozens of Ugandan soldiers died in the incident, as well as the hijackers and the leader of the Israeli raid force, Colonel Netanyahu. Michel Goldberg's book entitled "Namesake," which was first published in French and then translated into English and published by Yale University Press in 1982, includes two chapters on the Entebbe hijacking, since he was one of the hostages on board that Air France flight. Goldberg, along with all of the non-Israeli passengers, was freed and returned to Paris before the Israeli counter-insurgency units mounted their raid. Dora Bloch, an elderly Jewish passenger who was taken to a Ugandan hospital before the raid, was murdered on the following day by Idi Amin's soldiers, who were enraged by the deaths of the Ugandan guards at the airport. Goldberg relates that the third hijacker was years later spotted by the Air France captain of his earlier Entebbe flight, and was temporarily apprehended by airport authorities. This hijacker was now carrying a Syrian passport. After being subjected to a body search and some questioning, he was allowed to proceed freely.
- August 22, 1976 An Egyptian Airliner was hijacked in Cairo and after several hours Egyptian troops stormed the plane. The hijackers were seriously wounded.
- mid-1976 An Indian airline Boeing 737 was hijacked to Lahore, Pakistan. The Pakistani army captured the hijackers and no passengers were hurt.

- March 14, 1977 An Italian passenger hijacked an Iberia airlines plane on its way from Zurich to Spain. The hijackers surrendered.
- April 25, 1977 A Polish soldier tried to hijack a chartered plane at Krakov airport. He was overpowered by Polish troops.
- May 26, 1977 An Soviet Aeroflot airplane was hijacked to Stockholm. The hijackers surrendered.
- March 2, 1981 Pakistani International Airways flight 326 was hijacked from Karachi to Kabul and Damascus, while on a flight to Peshawar. This was at the time the world's longest hijacking.
- March 1981 A Garuda Airlines flight was hijacked from Indonesia to Bangkok by a group of South Molluccans. The Thai troops stormed the plane and killed the four hijackers.
- June 1985 TWA 847 was hijacked by Shiite Muslims while on a flight from Athens. The plane first went to Algiers and then to Beirut. This, along with the Entebbe incident, is probably the most famous hijacking, partly because some of the hostages suffered years of captivity in Lebanon after being taken off the plane in Beirut. Three U.S. Navy divers, who as fate would have it were travelling on board wearing their navy uniforms. One of the divers, Robert Stethem, was killed by the hijackers soon after the outbreak of the hijacking. The reason was unclear, other than that Stethem was wearing military uniform, and he was the unlucky one to be made the first victim. The U.S. military has since changed its instructions to the effect that military personnel should wear civilian clothes while on commercial flights, especially if they are on leave, as was the case with Stethem and his colleagues. The TWA flight captain, John Testrick, lives in the mid-west portion of the United States and flies small aircraft for his local church group. The TWA German stewardess, Ule Derikson, returned to live back in Germany and movie was made of her brave deeds while tending for the care of the beleaguered hostages and dealing with the moody hijackers. One of them, the elder Hamadi brother was apprehended later on in Germany, where he was tried and convicted (despite the requests of the U.S. Government for his extradition since it was an American plane that was involved and it was a U.S serviceman, who had been killed). Hamadi received a sentence of life imprisonment and rumor had it that he was going to be released, along with his younger brother. It turned out that the younger Hamadi kidnapped two German businessmen in Lebanon as a ploy to obtain his brother's release from the German authorities; the younger brother was also apprehended some time later in Germany on charges of arms smuggling and he was likewise detained and convicted in a German court and thereafter imprisoned in a different facility to that of the elder Hamadi.

Novemebr 23, 1985

Members of Abu Nidal's group hijacked an Egyptair flight that was enroute from Cairo to Athens. The plane was taken to Malta. The hijackers started to execute Jewish and other Western passengers, one by one. After five passengers had been executed and their bodies dumped on the tarmac, troops from Egypt's elite counter-terrorist force, called Thunderbolt, stormed the plane. The aircraft caught fire and 57 of the 98 passengers died in the inferno.

September 1986

Four members of Abu Nidal's group tried to hijack Pan Am Flight 73 at Karachi airport. A gun battle ensued and two of the hijackers were killed, but not before twenty passengers were also killed.

Falling Out With the Family

South Asia: Politics divides some ruling houses

NOT ONCE BUT TWICE, BENAZIR BHUTTO has overcome political disaster to make herself Pakistan's only female prime minister. But no woman is a hero to her mother. It's not that Benazir never calls, or that she failed to provide her mother with an adequate supply of grandchildren. Her filial shortcomings are purely political: she refused to help her younger brother's career, and she ousted her mother, Nusrat, from the leadership of the ruling party. Now Nusrat likens her daughter to the dictator who overthrew and subsequently executed her own husband, Benazir's father. She charges that her daughter's "so-called democracy" is just another tyranny. "God should never let a woman become a dictator," Nusrat wailed last week, "because a woman dictator will be worse than a man."

Benazir Bhutto, 40, obtained her political clout the old-fashioned way: she inherited it. In South Asia, wealthy families still play a conspicuous role in national politics: the Bhuttos in Pakistan, the Nehru-Gandhi clan in India, the Zias in Bangladesh and the Bandaranaiques in Sri Lanka. Despite the traditional male domination of their respective societies, each family has produced a female prime minister. But the dynasties have been under siege for years, their ranks thinned by assassinations, coups and electoral reverses. And now, as the world turns, some First Family members are squabbling with their own relatives.

The Bhutto family feud has actually drawn blood. Two weeks ago Benazir's police prevented Nusrat from visiting the grave of her husband, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who was deposed in 1977. In a struggle outside her home, one of Nusrat's supporters was killed. Each woman claims the family's political inheritance. Nusrat wants it for her son Muratza, 39, who recently returned from 16 years in exile and won a seat in a provincial legislature, despite the fact that he faces criminal charges for dabbling in terrorism. Nusrat is

suspicious of Benazir's in-laws. An arranged marriage to Asif Ali Zardari in 1987 has turned into a happy and fruitful union, producing three children. Apparently Nusrat fears that the Zardaris will usurp the Bhutto family's power.

Across the Generation Gaps



Prime Minister Bhutto fired her own mother from the leadership of the Pakistan People's Party. The mother, who wants her son to take the political helm, kicked Benazir out of two family houses.



The former prime minister, whose party is now out of power, wants her daughter to succeed her. Her son defied his bossy mother, bolted to the ruling party and became a cabinet minister.



While the First Family waits for a new generation to mature, widowed sisters-in-law jockey for position. Maneka became a "green" politician, and Sonia groomed her own daughter.

"I never thought I'd have to fight male chauvinism in my own family," Benazir Bhutto said last week. She has refused to support her brother's political ambitions or intervene in the criminal case against him. In retaliation, her mother has thrown Benazir out of two family homes, including the ancestral estate in Sind province. "Every

action that my mother makes against me hits my heart like a bullet," the prime minister complained.

In neighboring India, the Gandhi family struggles with a different kind of generation gap. The older family leaders all died violently. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was assassinated in 1984; her son and successor, Rajiv, suffered the same fate seven years later. Another son, Sanjay, died in a plane crash in 1980. The younger generation—Rajiv's daughter Priyanka, 22, seems the most promising—has not yet come into its

own. Lacking a real standard-bearer, the family has been represented mostly by two rival sisters-in-law.

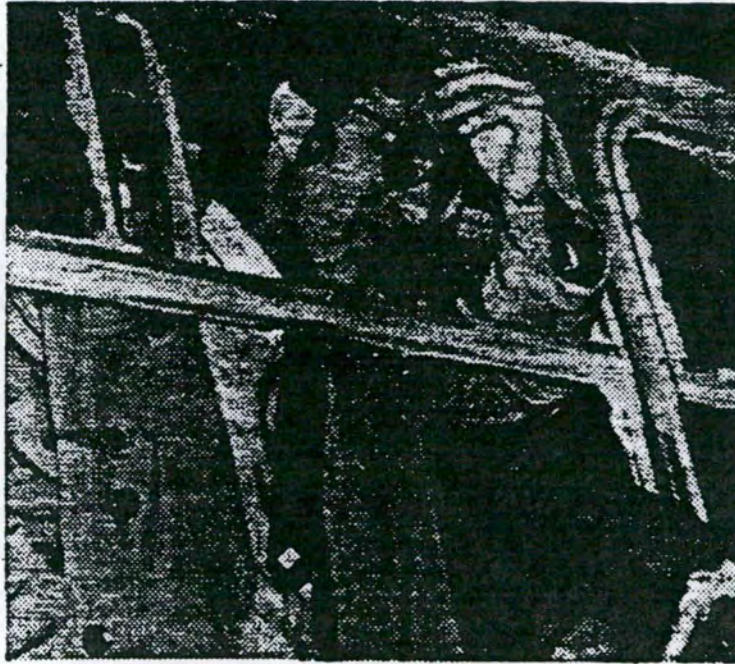
Staking claims: Sanjay's widow, Maneka, became India's first "green" politician, campaigning for environmental protection, animal rights and vegetarianism. "She has earned a strong claim to the Gandhi family's political legacy," argues one of her aides. Rajiv's Italian-born widow, Sonia, turned down an offer to lead the family's Congress party after his death. Now she keeps a toe in the political waters by attending certain official functions, accompanied by Priyanka and son Rahul, 24, who shows no interest yet in politics. On such occasions, they all wear the homespun clothes affected by Indian politicians who want to display a common touch.

If anything, the Bandaranaiques in Sri Lanka have too many would-be political leaders. Their matriarch, former prime minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike, is still feisty at 77. She wants her leftist Sri Lanka Freedom Party to be led by her daughter Chandrika, the chief minister of the island nation's Western province.

Her son, Anura, an able parliamentarian with a mind of his own, defected to the ruling United National Party, becoming minister of higher education last month. This has caused some personal friction; Anura complained last week about his mother's bossiness

and his sister's "discredited Marxism." But in a democratic age, having a foot in both the government and the opposition may be the surest way to keep a political dynasty in the family business.

RUSSELL WATSON with FAZAL QURESHI in Karachi, SUDIP MAZUMDAR in New Delhi and MERVYN DE SILVA in Colombo



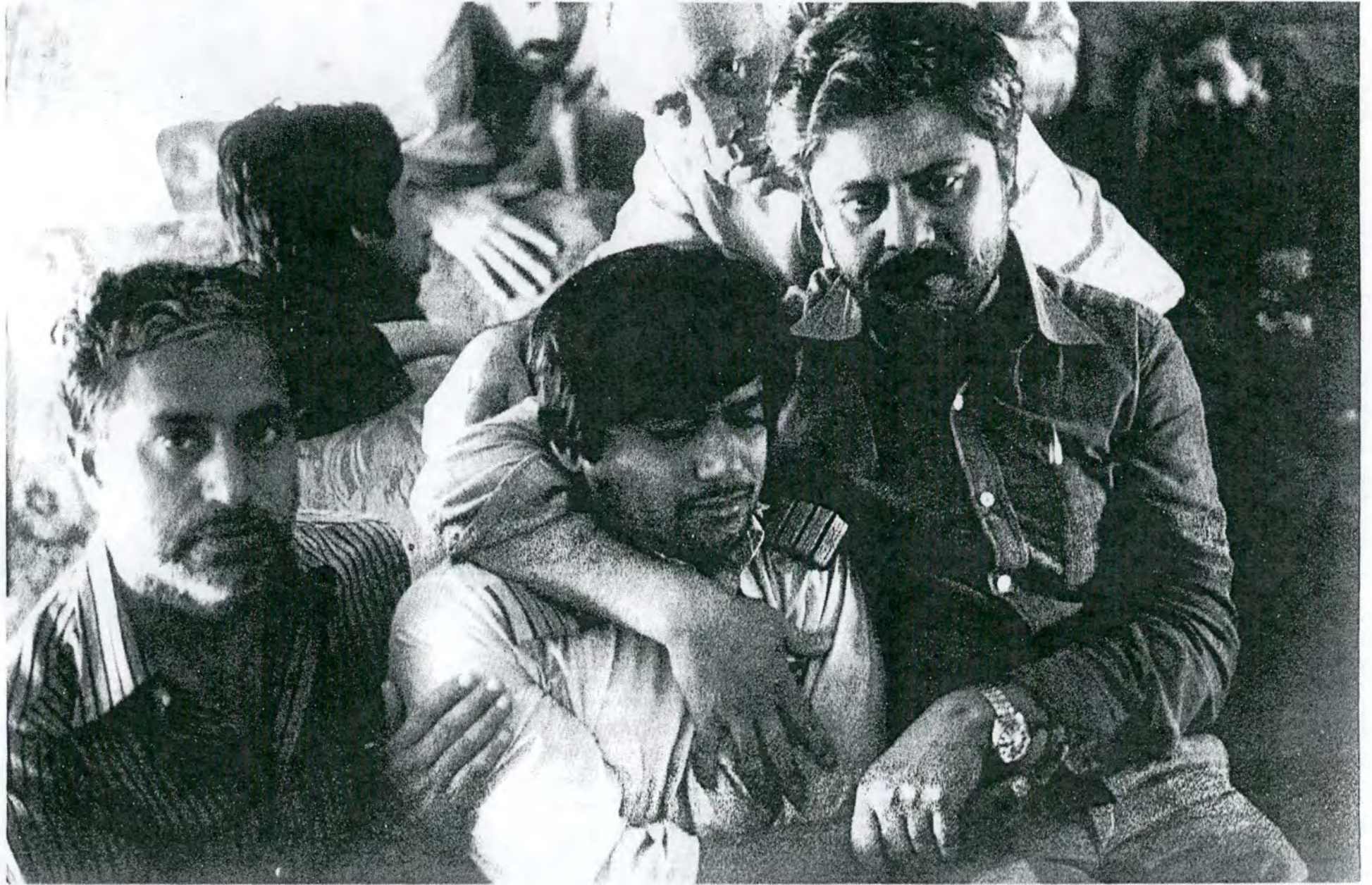
UPI

Jeffrey Balkind is interviewed on bus before leaving airport.

13-day captivity comes to an end

"It was 300 hours of looking down a machine gun (barrel)," said Jeffrey Balkind, who identified himself as a World Bank official, after being freed in Damascus yesterday. He and 101 others had been held for an agonizing 13 days before three terrorists released them last night in exchange for political asylum in Syria for themselves and more than 50 political prisoners freed by Pakistan. Many of the hostages wept and some appeared in shock from the long ordeal.

Daily News, Sunday, March 13, 1981



Captain Saeed Khan being comforted by Hostage (doctor) and others.

POSTSCRIPT

Throughout the ordeal, Jim Theodores kept his wonderful sense of humor. The words in the cable sent to me on March 14, 1981 will never be forgotten.

TELEX
HOMER 11379 SY

MARCH 14, 1981
61318

START
HERE TO MERIDIEN HOTEL

TY/COUNTRY DAMASCUS, SYRIA

MESSAGE NO FOR URGENT DELIVERY TO HAILE-MARIAM. PLEASE FORWARD SOONEST

4 TO STAFF MEMBER AND WIFE. QUOTE ALPHA DURING THESE LONG
5 NIGHTS IT OCCURRED TO ME JEFF MIGHT HAVE OVERLOOKED HIS
6 HAVING RUN AFOUL OF SOME OF OUR TIME HONORED RULES AS FOLLOWS:
7 AAA FAILED TO SHOW UP FOR WORK AS SCHEDULED AND DID NOT
8 INFORM SUPERVISOR AS REQUIRED.

9 BBB TOOK LEAVE OF TWO WEEKS WITHOUT PRIOR AUTHORIZATION.

10 CCC CHANGED TRAVEL ITINERARY WITHOUT INFORMING HEADQUARTERS.

11 DDD TRAVELED BY OTHER THAN MOST DIRECT ROUTES AND NOW
12 RESPONSIBLE FOR COST OF PERSONAL TRAVEL PORTION.

13 EEE ADDRESSING AN INTERNATIONAL AUDIENCE WITHOUT CLEARING
14 SPEECH WITH IPA.

15 FFF B.T.O. REPORT NOW OVERDUE AS ARE WEEKLY TIMESHEETS.

16 BETA EYE HAVE FEELING IF HE HAS MANAGED TO RETAIN HIS
17 SACHEL AND PAPERS INTACT HE MIGHT HAVE A STRONG BASIS FOR
18 A PLEA BARGAIN.

19 /c

Security - Hijacked Airliner

JLTheodores:ccc *TD*

JLTheodores *James S. Theodores*

AOPVP

WORLD BANK OUTGOING MESSAGE FORM (Telegram, Cable, T. Fax)

IMPORTANT MESSAGE READ INSTRUCTIONS BELOW BEFORE TYPING FORM

TELEX

MARCH 14, 1981

HOMER 11379 SY

61318

0
START
1 HERE TO
CITY/COUNTRY
MESSAGE NO
4
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END
OF
TEXT

GAMMA IF SACHEL IS LOST HE WILL REALLY HAVE TO THINK OF A
UNIQUE EXCUSE. IN ANY CASE HE WILL NEED A NOTE OF SOME KIND
BECAUSE YOU KNOW THE RULE AFTER BEING ABSENT FOR MORE THAN
FOUR DAYS. MAYBE HE SHOULD GET ONE FROM HIS CHIEF TRAVELING
COMPANION OF THE PAST COUPLE OF WEEKS. UNQUOTE
REGARDS, THEODORES.

Security - Hijacked Airliner

JLTheodores:ccc

JLTheodores

AOPVP