

D.B. COOPER'S LAST INTERVIEW

A factual documentary with a fictional ending

Adapted for radio by
John F. Barber
From an original story by
Tom Vandel

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Re-Imagined Radio
Season 13, Episode 11

Final draft

D.B. Cooper's Last Interview

A factual documentary with a fictional ending

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Season 13, Episode 11
Final Draft

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Synopsis

Re-Imagined Radio presents "D. B. Cooper's Last Interview," a factual documentary with a fictional ending. The documentary portion concerns a man known as D.B. Cooper who hijacks a passenger airplane Thanksgiving Eve, 1971, and then parachutes over southwest Washington state carrying \$200,000 in ransom money. A small portion of the money is recovered. But, Cooper, never apprehended, presumed dead, remains a mystery. The fictional ending is adapted from an original story by Tom Vandel [Van-DELL], "The Last Interview." Vandel identifies Cooper and answers questions without disrupting the power of this local legend. From our Guest Writer series.

Character Notes

Nick Frick is from Billings, Montana. He moves to Portland, Oregon, to work in advertising as a copywriter. Tired of his work, an aspiring author, and curious about D.B. Cooper, he wants to write a book on "obsession." The search for Cooper will anchor his book. Frick meets Carl Yurko at a Cooper conference in Portland. Hoping for a big story he travels to Astoria, Oregon to visit Yurko. Frick is nice, but nervous about the interview, and hides it well. He is between 40-50 years old.

Carl Yurko

A man obsessed with the story of D.B. Cooper, and for a very good reason.

Marge Yurko

Carl's mother. She's a handful, and deeper than first impressions might suggest.

Sources

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Ritt, Michael D. "Snippets of History #4 -- D.B. Cooper and Flight 305. Dec. 21, 2020. <https://michaelrritt.com/home/snippets-of-history-4-d-b-cooper-and-flight-305/>

Vandel, Tom. "The Last Interview." *The Broken World*. Tiny Road Books, 2021. Used by permission.

Color Code

Yellow highlighted text = sound effect(s), or actualities.

MUSIC = pre-recorded

MUSIC = bespoke, created for this episode

COLD OPEN

SFX: SAMPLE FROM CBS EVENING NEWS, NOV, 25, 1971, WITH WALTER CRONKITE REPORTING THE D.B. COOPER AIRPLANE HIJACKING.

CRONKITE

When he got on a plane in Portland, Oregon last night, he was just another passenger who gave his name as D.A. Cooper. But today, after hijacking a Northwest Airlines jet, ransoming the passengers in Seattle, then making a getaway by parachute somewhere between there and Reno, Nevada, the description on one wire service: Master criminal.

Source: mer kunskap. "Original D.B Cooper News Cast 1971." Nov. 25, 1971. *YouTube*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ksxyp4s6AXY>

THEME AND ANNOUNCER

MUSIC: RIR THEME

ANNOUNCER

Welcome to Re-Imagined Radio, a program about sound-based storytelling. With each episode we explore how dialogue, sound effects, and music can promote storytelling and engage your listening imagination. Here to tell you about THIS episode is John Barber, producer and host.

HOST OPEN

HOST

Thank you, Rylan. Hello everyone. Thanks for joining us.

Our episode is "D.B. Cooper's Last Interview."

The story begins more than fifty years ago with the report you just heard by CBS news anchor Walter Cronkite, who calls the hijacker "D.A. Cooper."

Further reporting mistakes change the name to "D.B Cooper." We'll hear more about that very soon.

D.B. Cooper, his alleged hijacking of Northwest Orient Flight 305 on Thanksgiving Eve 1971, and his daring escape is a legend here in the Pacific Northwest.

It's got a lot of appeal. True crime. Adventure. Mystery. And unanswered questions.

We've dealt with D.B. Cooper previously. From 2018 to 2020, Re-Imagined Radio explored this story through a three-part saga written and directed by Dan Wyatt, Jr.

Left untold was what happened to D.B. Cooper AFTER his daring escape. With this episode we address that question.

Our story is part fact, part fiction. We call it a factual documentary with a fictional ending.

For the factual documentary we sample research and recordings of individuals

investigating and reporting the hijacking.

For the fictional ending we adapt Tom Vandel's (Van-DELL) story "The Last Interview."

Familiar or not with the legend of D.B. Cooper, I hope you'll find this episode an engaging story.

For more information, and the transcript, see the episode page at our website, reimagedradio dot FM.

Thank you for listening as Re-Imagined Radio presents "D.B. Cooper's Last Interview."

MUSIC: FOR TRANSITION

ACT #1, THE HIJACKING

SFX: INTERIOR, CABIN OF BOEING 727-100. UNDER THE FOLLOWING, THE THREE ENGINES ARE HEARD THROUGH THE AIRCRAFT BODY AS THEY START AND WIND UP. PASSENGER CONVERSATIONS AND WALLAH. DUCK AND CONTINUE ALL UNDER THE FOLLOWING.

SFX: PA SYSTEM CLICKS ON. SOME MICROPHONE HANDLING NOISE.

SFX: INTERIOR. ANNOUNCEMENT BY CREW MEMBER.

FLORENCE

(VOICE FILTERED BY AIRPLANE'S PA SYSTEM)

Good evening, everyone. My name is Florence. I and the two other cabin attendants, Alice, and Tina, welcome you aboard Northwest Orient Airlines Flight 305 with service to Seattle, Washington. Once we're airborne we'll be happy to provide you drinks for one dollar, and complimentary juice, or coffee. But right now, in preparation for take off, please be sure you have securely fastened your seat belts. Thank you and enjoy your flight. We'll be underway shortly.

HOST

That's Florence Schaffner, one of three flight attendants aboard Flight 305. The other two are Alice Hancock and Tina Mucklow. More about Tina Mucklow in just a moment.

Northwest Orient Flight 305 is starting the last leg of a daily route between Washington, D.C. and Seattle, Washington. With stops in Minneapolis, Minnesota, Great Falls and Missoula, Montana, Spokane, Washington, and now Portland, Oregon, completed, there remains only a thirty-minute flight to Seattle.

The aircraft is a Boeing 727-100, a passenger jet built from 1960 to 1984.

A distinctive feature of the aircraft is the rear staircase, which can be lowered to the tarmac close to terminals without loading ramps.

According to Geoffrey Gray, Ralph Himmelsback, and Robert Edwards, authors writing about the Flight 305 hijacking, the rear staircase is also handy for covert deliveries. A collaborative statement from these three Cooper sleuths might sound like this . . .

SFX: RECORDED STATEMENT, FILTERED

COLLABORATIVE
STATEMENT

In the mid-1960s, the Central Intelligence Agency secretly parachuted supplies, weapons, and operatives into the jungles of Indochina from the rear staircase of Boeing 727s using a cutout company, Air America (Gray 20-21, 76, 269; Himmelsbach and Worcester 43; Edwards "Takhli," 46-57).

SFX: INTERIOR. FADE IN AIRPORT
TERMINAL WALLAH. ESTABLISH, THEN
DUCK UNDER AND OUT.

HOST

Portland International Airport, November 24, 1971, does not offer loading ramps at every gate. Thirty seven passengers for Flight 305 walk out to the waiting aircraft from Gate 52, Concourse L, anxious to get to Seattle, and the Thanksgiving weekend. They board using the rear staircase.

In an unbelievable coincidence, there are TWO passengers named "Cooper" aboard Flight 305, Dan Cooper and Michael Cooper.

Michael Cooper is a school teacher traveling from Missoula, Montana, to

Seattle, Washington. He remembers the passenger later known as D.B. Cooper.

SFX: ACTUALITY. MICHAEL COOPER.

SAMPLES FROM "INSIDE THE D.B.

COOPER HIJACKING: A PASSENGER'S

STORY WITH MICHAEL COOPER."

MICHAEL COOPER He tried to . . . he tried to board the airplane before . . . before it was, ah, officially allowed to board. And then, ahmm, he was the first one when they did allow people to walk across the tarmac to get on the plane. He was the first one to walk up the steps and immediately take the first seat, in the middle, on the right hand side rear of the airplane. . . . He was a trim . . . uh . . . in kind of a sport jacket type with a tie . . . uh . . . I'd say looks like as I . . . I think I mentioned maybe 40s or or 30s it was hard to say and . . . um . . . close shaven hair and you I kind of thought maybe he was a a pilot and so he was just maybe cruising along as pilots tend to. So I had no idea who he was. But he was the first guy to get on the airplane . . . there.

Sources

Gray, Geoffrey. *Skyjack: The Hunt for D.B. Cooper*. Crown Publishers, 2011.

"Inside the D.B. Cooper Hijacking: A Passenger's Story with Michael Cooper." Tillamook Air Museum. YouTube, Dec. 2, 2024.

Christian Gerling, museum curator, interviews Michael Cooper. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UPsxHUZEG-A>

"Teacher Named Cooper Picked The Wrong Day To Ride Airplane." *Deseret News*, Nov. 30, 1996
<https://www.deseret.com/1996/11/30/19280015/teacher-named-cooper-picked-the-wrong-day-to-ride-airplane/>

Hill, Kip. "Missoula Man Recalls Link to D.B. Cooper Hijacking. *The Missoulian*, 26 Nov. 2021. https://missoulian.com/news/local/article_8e5c4954-c5af-5f76-ae5d-cc91d1e16e78.html

Kenton, Luke. "Passenger on DB Cooper Flight Says Hijacker Was A 'Cool' Character in 'Charge' & Stared at Flyers Like He Was the 'Boss'." *The U.S. Sun*, 29 Jan. 2024. <https://www.the-sun.com/news/10227036/db-cooper-hijack-passenger-hostage-cool-boss-charge/>

HOST Other witnesses say this unknown man wears sunglasses much of the time. And slip-on loafers.

SFX: INTERIOR AIRPLANE AMBIENCE.
HYDRAULIC LEVER IN OPERATION.
WHINING OF MECHANISM AS THE
STAIRCASE IS RAISED UP INTO THE
PLANE'S FUSELAGE, A RUSH OF WIND.
CONTINUE UNDER THE FOLLOWING.

HOST Florence pulls the operating lever to raise the rear staircase. As it closes, a rush of cold wind fills the cabin.

A storm front, heavy with clouds and rain, fog, sleet, and possibly snow is predicted for the Thanksgiving weekend. Typical winter weather in the Pacific Northwest.

SFX: AIRPLANE INTERIOR. HEARD FROM
THE OUTSIDE, THE ENGINES WIND UP,
THE AIR FRAME SHUDDERS AS THE PLANE
PICKS UP SPEED DOWN THE RUNWAY, AND
TAKES OFF.

HOST At approximately 2:50 PM, Flight 305 is in the air, heading to Seattle. The man

seated in 18E, middle seat, right side, drinks Bourbon and smokes eight Raleigh filter tip cigarettes. According to Michael Cooper, he's talkative.

SFX: ACTUALITY. MICHAEL COOPER.

SAMPLES FROM "INSIDE THE D.B.

COOPER HIJACKING: A PASSENGER'S

STORY WITH MICHAEL COOPER."

MICHAEL COOPER The first thing I noticed after we took off was he started doing a lot of talking to the stewardess there and I think her name was Tina Muklow and they seem to be having a lot of conversation. And the other thing he had a kind of a briefcase or something that he had in the right hand seat. He was in the middle seat and Tina Mucklow was sitting on the aisle seat but he had his . . . uh . . . right hand almost all the time over on top of his, what looked like a briefcase.

I was sitting in the second to the rear seat on the left hand side. Nobody was sitting behind me and I was right next to the window.

Source: "Inside the D.B. Cooper Hijacking: A Passenger's Story with Michael Cooper." Tillamook Air Museum. YouTube, Dec. 2, 2024.
Christian Gerling, museum curator, interviews Michael Cooper. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UPsxHUZEG-A>

SFX: INTERIOR, AIRPLANE AS IT

CLIMBS UP AND AWAY FROM THE AIRPORT

RUNWAY. DUCK UNDER THE FOLLOWING.

HOST Michael Cooper is right. Tina Mucklow and the passenger in 18E do spend a lot of time talking and sitting together. But first, the passenger talks with Florence Schaffner.

As Flight 305 climbs toward its cruising altitude, "Passenger 18E" passes a note to Florence Schaffner, seated immediately behind him, in the jump seat. Florence opens the note thinking it will be an invitation for a drink or a request for a date. Instead, she is surprised to read . . .

**SFX: INTERIOR. AIRPLANE CABIN.
ENGINE NOISE PROVIDES A BACKDROP
FOR THE FOLLOWING.**

D.B. COOPER (FILTERED?) Miss . . . I have a bomb here and I would like you to sit by me (Gray 25).

SFX: FILTER OFF

HOST She does, and the passenger reaches for his briefcase in the empty window seat next to him.

**MUSIC: FOR SUSPENSE. DUCK UNDER THE
FOLLOWING.**

HOST Inside the briefcase, Florence sees eight red cylinders, each about eight inches long, a large battery, and lots of wires. It looks like a bomb.

Later, Florence asks Tina Mucklow to sit next to "Passenger 18E" while she takes

his note to the cockpit. Pilot Captain William A. Scott, co-pilot William Rataczak (Rat-a-SHACK) and Flight Engineer Harold E. Anderson decide the threat is real. Captain Scott radios to Northwest Flight Operations in Minnesota with Cooper's demands.

SFX: INTERIOR, AIRPLANE COCKPIT.

SFX: INTERIOR. AIRPLANE COCKPIT.

SCOTT

(VOICE FILTERED BY RADIO TRANSMISSION)
Passenger has advised this is a hijacking. En route to Seattle. The steward has been handed a note. He requests \$200,000 in a knapsack by 5:00 PM. He wants two back parachutes, two front parachutes. Has bomb in briefcase and will use it if anything is done to block his request.

MUSIC: DUCK UNDER THE FOLLOWING

HOST

Tina Mucklow and "Passenger 18E" spend the rest of the flight seated next to each other, talking. This is what Michael Cooper observes.

Flight 305 circles the Seattle airport for two hours. On the ground, everything stops. No flights in or out while the FBI gathers 10,000 twenty-dollar bills from nearly a dozen banks in the Seattle area. They microfilm the serial number of every bill. These numbers are printed in a 34-page booklet and distributed publicly (Gray 90, Himmelsbach 25, 74).

The money bag, from Seattle First National Bank, is canvas, 11 inches by 12 inches by 6.5 inches, and weighs 19 pounds (McNerthney).

The FBI also secures four parachutes, two primary (or back) and two reserve (or front).

Flight 305 finally lands at 5:39 PM.

Source: McNerthney, Casey. "\$5,800 of airplane hijacker D. B. Cooper's ransom money is found near the Columbia River on February 10, 1980." *HistoryLink.org*
<https://www.historylink.org/file/23059>

**MUSIC: FOR TRANSITION, DUCK UNDER
THE FOLLOWING**

**SFX: ACTUALITY. MICHAEL COOPER.
SAMPLES FROM "INSIDE THE D.B.
COOPER HIJACKING: A PASSENGER'S
STORY WITH MICHAEL COOPER."**

MICHAEL COOPER

Well when we landed, the aircraft just taxied to the end of the runway, turned around, and they shut off the engine and pretty soon a truck and a fuel . . . fuel tanker pulled up and a couple guys climbing up on the wings and started to refuel the aircraft and it again it . . . it didn't make any sense and yet there was no explanation as to what the heck was going on. No explanation whatsoever. And we sat there for . . . for quite a while until a . . . uh . . . a . . . uh . . . a . . . uh a vehicle pulled up and the vehicle was pulling one of those portable chairs . . . portable stairwells, and uh . . . that was hooked

up on the front left hand side of the airplane. And I'm sitting there and pretty soon this stewardess from the front of the airplane runs down the aisle with this big sack, and in this in the sack says I think Seattle First Bank or something like that.

Anyway she walks through the stern of the aircraft carrying this big sack . . . and she comes back . . . comes back with a parachute, a small parachute that she's carrying and then she comes back a couple more times with more parachutes I think she's if I remember correctly about four parachutes that she brought and then she goes back and . . . uh in a minute or so we are told on the intercom to depart immediately in the in the front left hand side of the aircraft.

Source: "Inside the D.B. Cooper Hijacking: A Passenger's Story with Michael Cooper." Tillamook Air Museum. YouTube, Dec. 2, 2024.
Christian Gerling, museum curator, interviews Michael Cooper. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UPsxHUZEG-A>

HOST Michael Cooper, thirty five other passengers, and two flight attendants, Alice Hancock and Florence Schaffner, exit the aircraft. They board a bus waiting to take them to the airport terminal.

SFX: ACTUALITY. MICHAEL COOPER.
SAMPLES FROM "INSIDE THE D.B.
COOPER HIJACKING: A PASSENGER'S
STORY WITH MICHAEL COOPER."

MICHAEL COOPER And I got the heck out of there quickly and down the steps and the bus had pulled up. And I immediately got on the bus, along with all the other people who were ahead of me. And, umhm . . . there, we were told to sit down and a guy starts calling off a roster of people on the aircraft and . . . uh he starts out alphabetically of course. He says "D. Cooper" not DB. He says "D. Cooper" and nobody speaks up and he says "D. Cooper" and nobody speaks up and I finally stood up and waved my hand and said, "It's M. Cooper, Michael Cooper" and I saw him cross something off the paper. And then he continues alphabetically down the list and . . . um everybody else . . . uh responds and then the bus drives us to the the terminal building and it's . . . uh there that they tell us to depart and go up the stairs. And then there's a bunch of people there that are . . . uh asking us to go sit down and then they interview each of us and . . . ah . . . these apparently are the FBI people and they each interview us and just say ask us who we are, where we came from, what was our reason for for coming there and then they say that we can be excused.

Source: "Inside the D.B. Cooper Hijacking: A Passenger's Story with Michael Cooper." Tillamook Air Museum. YouTube, Dec. 2, 2024.
Christian Gerling, museum curator, interviews Michael Cooper. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UPsxHUZEG-A>

MUSIC: FOR TRANSITION

HOST Using the ticket issued to the missing passenger, which shows his name, "DAN COOPER," spelled out clearly in all

capital letters, FBI agents identify the hijacker (Gray 58, 60, 66-71, 74).

A pair of mistakes in early press reports about the hijacking change the name "Dan Cooper" to "D.B. Cooper." And so the mysterious hijacker is known ever after.

Both mistakes originate in Portland. First, Clyde Jabin (JAY-ben), a stringer for United Press International wire service, asks an FBI Agent if they have a name for the hijacker.

SFX: TELEPHONE CONVERSATION.

FILTERED.

FBI VOICE (FILTERED BY TELEPHONE) Yeah. D. Cooper.

JABIN (FILTERED BY TELEPHONE, NOT HEARING WHAT THE AGENT SAID.) Is that "D" as in dog, or "B" as in boy?

FBI VOICE (FILTERED BY TELEPHONE) Yeah.

HOST Jabin (JAY-bin) submits his story naming the hijacker "D.B. Cooper" (Gray 75).

James Long, a reporter for *The Oregon Journal*, is also credited with creating the "D.B. Cooper" name. This is his story.

SFX: ACTUALITY. JAMES LONG.

"REPORTER WHO NAMES D.B. COOPER."

USE MUSIC AT END OF THIS ACTUALITY

AS TRANSITION TO NEXT SEGMENT.

JAMES LONG

I had a former coworker named Duane Youngbar, and then he become a flack for Western Airlines. And so I thought, well I'm never going to get through to Northwest right now, it's insane. So I called Youngbar. I said, "can you get me through to your counterparts at Northwest." He said, well, he said, "I don't know, boy things are pretty wild, let me see what I could do." So I think what happened was he called his buddy and he may have, you know, put me on the line but he didn't tell them that I was on the line or else he had two phones up and . . . because I remember that the sound wasn't very good but I could hear Dwayne talking and people were talking over each other. I said, well, you know, give me a name and so he said, "Cooper, we got that Cooper C-o-o-p-e-r." So what was his first name. And this is where I'm not sure how this happened but somehow or other I came up with "DB" and actually I think he registered for his you know . . . ticket as "Dan B Cooper." So, uh, I went to the City Desk and I said, and "the guy's name is D.B. Cooper." So I think I just told whoever it was who, you know, had writing the story, what the name was and he just typed it in, you know, was identified as blank. He typed in "D.B. Cooper." Went out on the UPI wire and went you know worldwide and then it wasn't too long afterwards uhmm somebody called and said the, uh, said, the FBI says it was "Dan Cooper" and so we tried to correct it. Nobody, nobody wanted it. Human beings love stories and you don't understand

aircraft, and into history and mystery as the perpetrator of the only unsolved case of air piracy in American passenger aviation history.

Flight 305, with only four crew members aboard, proceeds to Reno, Nevada, for refueling. CBS News reporter Bill Kurtis is there when it lands at approximately 11:02 PM and files this report.

SFX: ACTUALITY. SAMPLE FROM CBS EVENING NEWS, NOV, 25, 1971, BILL CURTIS REPORTING THE D.B. COOPER AIRPLANE HIJACKING.

BILL KURTIS

Thirty six passengers got off the jetliner in Seattle last night. Left aboard, four crew members and the hijacker, dressed in a business suit, demanding \$200,000, and carrying a plain briefcase, which he told the crew held explosives.

With the full ransom collected from Seattle banks, and four parachutes aboard, the plane headed for Reno. It took three and a half hours, slow for a jet, but the hijacker had given detailed flight instructions. The rear stairwell was open all the way. It arrived at Reno in shreds.

The crew, here being debriefed by the FBI, was told to fly low over Oregon's flatlands with the flaps down, the speed dropped to 200 miles per hour. Somewhere

the hijacker parachuted away with the money. The crew had little to say.

CAPTAIN SCOTT Ohh, uhmm . . . We gave the information to the authorities and they just don't want to discuss it any further.

BILL KURTIS Have you been told by the FBI not to discuss?

CAPTAIN SCOTT No, they handle their investigation and my company would rather have it released through them.

BILL KURTIS Tina, were you with the rest of the crew during the flight after you left the ground the last time?

TINA MUCKLOW Yes, I went up to the cockpit

BILL KURTIS None of you were of within sight of the hijacker, right?

TINA MUCKLOW We already talked about it in the captain's . . .

BILL KURTIS Well, how did you surmise that he was not on the plane when he landed in Reno?

HAROLD CAMPBELL Well, a search was made of the plane
FBI AGENT immediately ahh after landing.

BILL KURTIS As we understood it, he could have gotten off as the plane taxied before it came up here.

HAROLD CAMPBELL No way.
FBI AGENT

BILL KURTIS How did the crew know he wasn't on when it touched ground?

HAROLD CAMPBELL
FBI AGENT No way. The crew couldn't know that, but we had the airport covered.

BILL KURTIS Snow covers the mountains in northern California and Nevada, a hostile terrain for any parachute drop, especially at night. Police believe he left the 727 in the flatlands of Oregon or Washington, but they are still looking in four states, even around the airport. Authorities began their search here, thinking the hijacker may have jumped off at the end of the runway as the plane touched down, but the problem is more complex.

A daring parachute escape from a flying 727 somewhere between Reno and Seattle, Washington. Bill Kurtis, CBS News, Reno, Nevada.

Source: mer kunskap. "Original D.B Cooper News Cast 1971." Nov. 25, 1971. *YouTube*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ksxyp4s6AXY>

HOST Brooks Burford, reporter for Seattle's KIRO 7 TV, describes the search for D.B. Cooper in Washington state.

SFX: ACTUALITY. SAMPLES. BROOKS BURFORD. "D.B.COOPER WHERE ARE YOU?"

BROOKS BURFORD Hundreds of troops combed the woods near Woodland and east to the town of Ariel. The search for Cooper and his two hundred thousand dollars went on for

weeks but nobody really knew where he bailed out, where he landed, or even if he survived.

Source: Burford, Brooks. "D.B. Cooper: Where Are You?" KIRO 7 News Report, 1980.

MUSIC: FOR TRANSITION

SFX: INTERIOR. CROWDED BAR. CROWD WALLAH.

HOST

Did D.B. Cooper survive his jump from Flight 305, and escape? Many Washington residents believe he did. They gather each year at the General Store and Tavern, in the tiny town of Ariel, to celebrate "D.B. Cooper Days." Many a glass is raised to the anti-hero who got away.

SFX: ACTUALITY. MAN REMARKS ABOUT ARIEL, WASHINGTON COOPER FESTIVAL, AND HOW ATTENDEES TAKE PLEASURE IN THINKING THAT D.B. COOPER MIGHT BE AMONG THEM.

MAN

. . . [A] lot of them still think he landed in this area somewhere, made his way towards the Columbia somehow. For all we know he's been here, you know walked in had a beer and walked out just to see what the place was like.

Source: Burford, Brooks. "D.B. Cooper: Where Are You?" KIRO 7 News Report, 1980.

MUSIC: TO INDICATE THE PASSAGE OF TIME, FRUSTRATION, AND MYSTERY

HOST The FBI investigates the hijacking of Flight 305 for forty-five years. Neither Cooper nor the ransom money is found. In July 2016, the FBI closes the case, contingent on any additional evidence coming to light. According to an FBI website, "D.B. Cooper Hijacking," . . .

SFX: VOICE READING INFORMATION FROM
FBI WEBPAGE.

VOICE The FBI learned of the crime in-flight and immediately opened an extensive investigation that lasted many years. Calling it NORJAK, for NORTHWEST HiJAcKing, we interviewed hundreds of people, tracked leads across the nation, and scoured the aircraft for evidence. By the five-year anniversary of the hijacking, we'd considered more than 800 suspects and eliminated all but two dozen from consideration.

Source: "D.B. Cooper Hijacking." FBI > History > Famous Cases and Criminals.

MUSIC: RIR THEME FOR BREAK

THE FUSEBOX BREAK

HOST You're listening to Re-Imagined Radio. Our episode is "D.B. Cooper's Last Interview." I'm John Barber. My apologies for interrupting the story, but we need to reset the studio for Act Three. While that's underway, it's a good time to tell you about "The Fusebox Show."

Produced by Marc Rose, Milt Kanen, and Jeff Pollard, each episode features a full course of what they call "Ear Food," wit slathered conversation and commentary about current events and contemporary culture. Here's a sample.

SFX: THE FUSEBOX SHOW TEASER

HOST Learn more, and subscribe to the podcast at *The Fusebox Show* website, thefuseboxshow dot com.

MUSIC: RIR THEME, FADE UNDER AND OUT FOR THE FOLLOWING

ACT #3, THE INTERVIEW

HOST This is Re-Imagined Radio and we're considering the hijacking of Northwest Orient Flight 305, Thanksgiving 1971. A passenger called "D.B. Cooper" hijacked the airplane and escaped with \$200,000 in ransom money by parachuting from the rear staircase.

Today, more than fifty years later, the question lingers: "What happened to D.B. Cooper, and the money, after he escaped?"

Tom Vandel (Van-DELL), copywriter and creative director for Les Overhead Advertising, based in Portland, Oregon, imagines an answer in his short story, "The Last Interview." With Tom's permission, Re-Imagined Radio adapts his story as the second half of this episode. Enjoy listening.

SFX: EXTERIOR. EVENING. HOUSE IN
ASTORIA OREGON. IN THE BACKGROUND
IS THE HUM OF TRAFFIC CROSSING THE
ASTORIA-MIGLER BRIDGE.
OCCASIONALLY, A SHIP'S HORN IS
HEARD FROM A SHIP NAVIGATING THE
COLUMBIA RIVER BELOW. ESTABLISH.
THEN DUCK UNDER THE FOLLOWING.

SFX: RECORDING FROM NICK FRICK'S
DIGITAL RECORDER. THIS RECORDING
BEGINS WITH A DISTINCTIVE SOUND
ENVELOPE REPRESENTING ITS AGE AND
CONTEXT. FOR EXAMPLE, IT IS MUFFLED
SLIGHTLY BY THE RECORDER'S APPARENT
PLACEMENT IN A JACKET POCKET DURING
THE RECORDING TIME FRAME. BUT, IN
THE COURSE OF PLAYBACK, THIS SOUND
ENVELOPE GRADUALLY MORPHS TO A
DIFFERENT ONE, REPRESENTING
IMMERSION IN THE REALITY OF THE
STORY IT TELLS.

NICK FRICK (TO HIMSELF. TO A SMALL RECORDER.) Okay, I think we're recording. Test, test. 1. 2. 1. 2. Yah. Just got this Sony Scoopman and anxious to try it out. It's working. Good!

(SPEAKING TO HIS RECORDER) This is Nick Frick. It's Wednesday, November 27, 1991. Just past 7:00 PM.

I'm at the home of Carl Yurko. Address: 1337 Franklin Street, Astoria, Oregon.

I met Carl at a D.B. Cooper convention in Portland last year. He said he has a story about D.B. Cooper that impacted

his life. It's taken a year, but I'm finally here to interview him. I hope this pans out.

(TO HIMSELF) That's good. I'll put this recorder in my jacket pocket and just let it run.

SFX: EXTERIOR. TRAFFIC AND RIVER WALLAH CONTINUES. RUSTLING SOUND AS NICK PUTS HIS RECORDER IN THIS JACKET POCKET. THE SOUND ENVELOPE IS IMMEDIATELY MUFFLED. FOOTSTEPS ON GRAVEL, THEN WOODEN STEPS, FRONT PORCH, KNOCK ON DOOR. DOOR OPENS.

CARL YURKO (FROM INSIDE THE HOUSE) Hey, Nick. I see ya made it here okay.

NICK FRICK (STANDING ON THE PORCH) Yeah. Hi Carl. Good to see you again. Thanks for inviting me. This is a wonderful old home! Must be quite the view during the day!

MARGE FRICK (INTERIOR. COMING TO THE DOOR) Who the hell are you?

NICK Hello. You must be Marge Yurko, Carl's Mother. Nice to meet you Ma'am.

MARGE Call me Marge.

NICK (UPBEAT) You got it, Marge.

CARL Give him a break, Mother. I invited him out for an interview.

MARGE (TO HER SON, CARL.) Be careful what you say, Carl. What the hell you got going here, Mr. Frick?

NICK (SOMEWHAT EXASPERATED) Well, Mrs. Yurko . . . (REMEMBERING) . . . Marge . . . I hope to write a book and I might include your son in it, and also you, maybe. This interview won't take too long and I'll be out of your hair.

CARL Ahh, come in. Come in, Nick. Come in the house and we'll talk.

SFX: INTERIOR. HOUSE SOUND
ENVELOPE. CARL AND NICK'S FOOTSTEPS
ENTERING THE HOUSE HEARD ON THE
WOODEN FLOOR, ALONG WITH THE
SHUFFLING FEET OF MARGE.

MARGE Where you from, Nick?

NICK Montana. At least, that's where I went to high school and college. Billings West and Eastern Montana College. But I've lived in Portland for awhile. I work there as an advertising writer.

MARGE You drove all the way out here to talk to Carl?

NICK Yeah. It's not a problem.

MARGE What do you do, besides write stuff?

NICK (JUSTIFYING HIMSELF, HIS EXISTENCE) Well, I do some private investigation work at times. And I play basketball twice a week.

MARGE And you think you can write an actual book?

NICK That's the general idea.

MARGE Have you been drinking, Mr. Frick?

NICK (LAUGHING OFF HIS INTERROGATION) No, I haven't been drinking. Have you?

MARGE As a matter of fact I have. What's this book of yours about?

NICK (SELLING HIS BOOK IDEA TO MARGE) Well, Marge . . . the book is about D.B. Cooper. The obsessive search to know what happened to him. How that affects people and families. People like you, and Carl. His obsession with the D.B. Cooper search, and how that has affected his life could be a powerful story.

CARL (DEFENSIVE) I told you before, I am not obsessed with it.

NICK People are interested in the D.B. Cooper myth.

MARGE Nobody gives a hoot anymore about D.B. Cooper.

NICK Well, I believe there is a big audience. Perhaps not for Cooper, but for what he stands for.

MARGE Sounds boring as heck.

CARL (PLACATING) It's okay, Mother. We'll talk here at the kitchen table. Everybody take a seat.

SFX: INTERIOR. CHAIRS PULLED INTO PLACE AROUND THE TABLE. THEY SCRAPE THE WOODEN FLOOR.

NICK (RELIEVED) Okay, let's begin. I got my notebook here. Could I get your names and address, please.

CARL My name is Carl Yurko. I live at 1337 Franklin in Astoria, Oregon.

NICK And your mother?

CARL Her name is . . .

MARGE (STEPPING ON CARL) . . . I can talk. My name is Marge Yurko and I live with my no-good, lie-about son. His name is Carl.

CARL (EMBARRASSED AND FRUSTRATED) Oh yeah, right. Stop it, mother.

MARGE (UNFAZED) Living with his mother. Pathetic! What a bum!

CARL (DEFENSIVE) The bum who takes care of you every damn day.

NICK Carl, you told me you grew up in Astoria and graduated from Astoria High School. Is that right?

CARL Yeah.

MARGE (MOCK ENTHUSIASM) Go Fishermen.

NICK What did you do after high school?

CARL I worked on a fishing boat in Alaska. Came back here. Joined the Marines. Went to Vietnam. Returned to Astoria and have been here pretty much ever since, other than that, spent some time in Montana after I left the service.

NICK Carl, you and I met at a D.B. Cooper conference last year. That right?

CARL Yeah. That's right.

MARGE (JUMPING IN) I'm the one who told you about that conference. I saw it in the paper.

NICK (TO CARL) Why were you there?

MARGE (INTERJECTS) Looking for babes.

CARL (FRUSTRATED. ANGRY.) Stop it, Mother. I just like to go to the conferences. You know, keep up on the search.

NICK What about the search?

CARL Well, I asked the FBI guy if they ever found any shoes.

NICK Shoes? Why did you ask about shoes?

CARL Cooper wore black loafers and I figured they must have come off when he bailed out.

NICK Who are they?

CARL Ahh, left to right: O'Donnell, Yates, Coogan, and me.

NICK This is you? Carl Yurko, on the right?

CARL Yep. This is where the story starts.

NICK Tell me more.

MARGE Carl, shut the hell up!

CARL (RESPONDING) I know what I'm doing, Mother. You'll see.

MARGE I want a beer. Get me a Rainier.

SFX: INTERIOR. RISES FROM CHAIR.

BEGINS WALKING TO KITCHEN

CARL (AGGRAVATED. FRUSTRATED.) Gosh darn it, Mother! (MORE CALMLY, TO NICK) You want a beer, Nick? Got 'em right in the fridge.

SFX: INTERIOR. CHAIR MOVED BACKWARD

ON WOODEN FLOOR. FOOTSTEPS TO

REFRIGERATOR. DOOR OPENS.

NICK (CALLING AFTER CARL) Uh, sure. I'll have a Rainier.

CARL (PAUSE, THEN CALLING BACK TO NICK) Oh crap, we only have one left.

NICK (CALLING OUT) Give it to your Mom. I'm fine.

SFX: INTERIOR. IN KITCHEN. HEARD
FROM LIVING ROOM. RAINIER BEER CAN
POP TOP OPENS.

MARGE I'll take it, but go to the Food Mart
and get another six-pack. Get two! Now.

SFX: INTERIOR. FOOTSTEPS BACK INTO
LIVING ROOM.

CARL Mother, I'll do it after the interview.

MARGE (COMMANDING, THREATENING) Do it now, or
I'm gonna make a racket. Don't make me
yell!

CARL (PLACATING) Okay, I'll run to the store.
(TO NICK) Ten minutes.

NICK Really? She can't wait?

CARL No, no, NO. She needs her beer. Keeps
her regular. I'll be right back.

MARGE (NO SENSE OF THE TROUBLE SHE IS CAUSING)
And get some lottery tickets!

THE RIR BREAK

MUSIC: RIR THEME. ESTABLISH, THEN
FADE OUT UNDER THE FOLLOWING.

HOST This is Re-Imagined Radio, a program
about sound-based storytelling. With
each episode we experiment with
dialogue, music, and sound effects to
create storytelling for your ears and
imaginations. Here are some examples.

SFX: RE-IMAGINED RADIO AUDIO

TRAILER

HOST More information is available at our website--reimaginedradio DOT FM.

MUSIC: RIR THEME, ESTABLISH, THEN

DUCK UNDER THE FOLLOWING

ACT #4, SPILL THE BEANS

HOST You're listening to Re-Imagined Radio. Our episode is "D.B. Cooper's Last Interview." It includes our adaptation of a story written by Tom Vandell [Vandell] of Portland, Oregon. Let's continue listening.

SFX: INTERIOR. FRONT DOOR OPENS,

FOOTSTEPS ON WOODEN FLOOR INTO

HOUSE.

CARL (COMING IN. SOMEWHAT OUT OF BREATH)
Okay. Now are you happy. Here's your beer.

NICK (WHISPERING) Thanks. I think your mom fell asleep. I can hear her snoring.

SFX: INTERIOR. KITCHEN. LIGHT

SNORING AS MARGE SLEEPS IN HER

CHAIR.

CARL She falls asleep pretty easy.

NICK Let's get back to the interview. You said you had a story to share. Give me the highlights.

CARL It's your lucky day, Nick. You struck gold. We're going to need to draw up a contract.

NICK Well, you got my interest, man. Spill the beans.

CARL It all started here. With Danny.

NICK You're pointing to one of the soldiers in the photo of your patrol squad in Vietnam. What's his name?

CARL Danny Coogan. He was my brother in everything but blood. He was my bud. Danny Coogan from Dillon, Montana. One tough critter. We took turns saving each other's lives. I owe him one.

NICK So, what about Danny?

CARL It was his idea. The hijacking.

NICK What hijacking?

CARL What d'ya think I'm talking about? THE hijacking!

NICK The Cooper hijacking you mean? Go on.

CARL Yeah. D.B. Cooper is in this photo.

NICK Really? It's this guy . . . Danny Coogan?

CARL (MATTER OF FACT) No.

NICK Well, can't be this guy. Doesn't look anything like him.

CARL That's Manny. Manny Yates. Drowned in a lake in Canada.

NICK Which one is it? You?

CARL Nope. Him.

SFX: TAPPING THE GLASS COVERED PHOTOGRAPH WITH A FINGER NAIL.

NICK (EXCITED, BUT FRUSTRATED) Carl, you can't just point at the photo. You gotta say his name out loud.

CARL O'Donnell. Better known as O.D.

NICK (AMAZED BY THE REVELATION) O'Donnell is D.B. Cooper?

CARL Yep. Kevin D. O'Donnell, as he was baptized I believe. From Pittsburgh, P. A.

NICK You ever told anyone this before?

CARL No. Not a soul.

NICK Why are you talking now?

CARL Did you know the FBI indicted D.B. Cooper even though they never caught him? Even without knowing who he is? They indicted him in *absentia* so they could prosecute him anytime. If they ever catch him. Even though it's beyond the statute of limitations.

NICK That's right. Go on.

CARL O.D. kicked it one month ago. Pancreatic cancer. In Las Vegas. I promised him I'd never tell and I haven't. Until now.

NICK You kiddin' me? Can you prove this, Carl?

CARL Yep.

NICK How? What's the story?

CARL Well, it started with Danny. Dan Coogan was his real name, but our new platoon leader kept calling him Cooper by mistake. Dan Cooper. It was "Cooper get on point," "Cooper get down in that tunnel," this and that. So we started calling him "Cooper" and it stuck. He was Cooper from then on. (LAUGHS)

NICK Dan Cooper? That was the name the hijacker gave on the plane, before the press called him D.B. by mistake.

CARL As mother would say, "DUH." But he wasn't the man who did it.

NICK Dan Coogan, you mean?

CARL Coogan, Cooper, same guy. He did NOT hijack the plane. But it was his idea.

NICK Go on, I think I'm following.

CARL Well Danny used to tell us he wanted to hijack a plane and get a ransom and bail out with the money and get away. He said it a lot. To us anyway. He said it could be done. Said he used to parachute out

of crop duster planes for fun in Montana.

NICK Were you paratroopers in Vietnam?

CARL No. Just grunts. Earthworms. Tunnel rats. We never got up in the air unless we stepped on a landmine.

NICK So, Dan Coogan, aka Cooper, had the hijacking idea. But he is not D.B. Cooper?

CARL That's right! Danny's not D.B. Cooper! Danny got shot through the throat on Halloween, 1969. Worst day of my life.

NICK I'm sorry to hear that, Carl. So, Coogan is nicknamed Cooper, but he's not D.B. Cooper the hijacker?

CARL Correct. I told you, O.D. is D.B. Cooper.

NICK O.D. is D.B.?

CARL Yep.

NICK How do you know O'Donnell is D.B. Cooper, the hijacker? Can you prove it?

CARL Well, I helped him do it. I abetted the crime, as they say. But I can't be charged now. The FBI indictment was only for Cooper, meaning O.D.

NICK Tell me the whole story.

CARL We'll get there. First, I got a question for you. How do you plan to sell this book? You got a publisher or agent? And what kind of rights do we have?

NICK We'll go over that after I hear your story. We'll decide on a split of some sort. Or I'll just pay you a fee.

CARL Mother and I could use that money. The sooner, the better.

NICK You're not the only one. Let's hear your story.

CARL O.D. finished his tour two weeks ahead of me. We met up in Missoula. I was going to enroll at the university. O.D. and I got jobs and lived together in a dive house . . . across from the railroad tracks, it was near the Park Hotel.

NICK What happened there?

CARL O.D. heard on the radio that the Silvertip Skydivers were offering skydiving lessons. He wanted us both to do it. I said no way, I don't like planes. Or heights. So, go figure that. He did it anyway and loved it. He jumped several times and thought he wanted to be a smoke jumper.

By September, I decided I didn't want to go to college and moved back home to Astoria. O.D. stayed in Missoula. He kept skydiving but changed his mind about being a smoke jumper. Thought

jumping into forest fires was too dangerous.

NICK Okay. Then what?

CARL O.D. called me drunk one night and said he was gonna do it.

NICK Do what?

CARL Hijack a plane, like Danny had always wanted to do.

NICK What was his plan?

CARL He was going to hitchhike to Billings and get on a plane to Salt Lake City. Hijack it and get a ransom, and then head toward Mexico and jump out over the Grand Canyon. The more I thought about it, I thought he should jump out somewhere in the Northwest, and I could pick him up when he landed.

NICK You offered to help him do it?

CARL Oh, hell, yeah. I had nothing going on in Astoria. I was just bartending. And we both wanted to honor Cooper. O.D. said we could split the money. He was gonna ask for two hundred grand.

NICK Carl. Tell me you're not making this up!

CARL God's honest truth.

NICK Go on.

CARL O.D. came to Astoria and lived with us. He would borrow my truck when I was at work and go out and look around. One day he drove me out there and said, "This is it." "Landing Zone O.D." he called it. It was north of Battle Ground. Open spaces, not a lot of people. He said if he jumped at the right time, under 10,000 feet, he would be fine. He had . . . he had it all worked out.

NICK It was the night before Thanksgiving, right?

CARL Yep. November 24, 1971.

NICK Tell me about that day.

CARL That morning in Astoria we went down to J.C. Penney and bought a dark suit for him to wear on the plane.

NICK Okay, then what?

CARL Well, I drove O.D. to the Portland airport and he was gonna get a ticket under the name Dan Coogan. But at the last minute, he changed it to Dan Cooper. He didn't want to cause any trouble for Danny's parents, so he went with Dan Cooper. He got on the plane and I drove back to Astoria and waited to see if I'd hear from him that night. Or ever again. I thought his chances were 50-50.

NICK You are blowin' my mind, man.
(SERIOUSLY) Unless you're messing with me. Carl, this is crazy!

CARL Damn right. I remember what an FBI investigator said about it. He said it was so crazy that no experienced skydiver would ever try it. Said he probably never got his chute open. He was dead wrong.

NICK So, what happened next?

CARL Late that night, I got a, I got a call from O.D. He'd jumped and survived. He said he blacked out for a bit coming out of the plane, but then came to and got his chute open. The clouds broke and he saw the taillights of vehicles on I-5. As he came down he saw the lights of a town, so he tried to head for a flat spot on the outskirts, he wouldn't have to walk far. He'd taken his loafers off cause he knew they would blow off his feet. Figured he needed them to walk out, so he stuck them down his pants. But one fell out. He landed in his stocking feet with the money strapped to his body. He stashed his parachute in the field. Then walked to a road and into town.

NICK What town?

CARL Woodland, ten miles north of his landing zone. The wind blew him north, more than he thought it would.

NICK Seriously? It was that easy?

CARL He'd explored the area, you see. He knew where Woodland was. He had it worked

out. H knew the flight path would go near the landing area he had in mind.

NICK You're referring to O.D.?

CARL (IRRITATED) What? (AFTER A PAUSE, HE UNDERSTANDS) Yes! Are you paying attention? Christ on a crutch!

NICK So far you have all the details right, at least what I know, but all of this was in the news. You could have read it and made this whole thing up.

CARL You'll see.

NICK So, go on.

CARL He called me from a pay phone. Told me where he was. I picked him up and we went back to the field where he left the chute. We got it and drove back home.

NICK With all the money?

CARL He dropped some. It was found later by that kid.

NICK So, you get back to Astoria. What did you do with the money and all?

CARL Hid it in the cellar.

NICK Is it still there? All of it?

CARL The money is mostly gone. But there are a few other items you'll want to see.

NICK (OVERCOME WITH FRUSTRATED EXCITEMENT)
I'm gonna kill you if you're messing with me, Carl. What happened next? What did you do?

CARL
The next day it was all over the news. We couldn't believe it. How big a deal it was. We talked it over and he said, "I gotta get the hell outta here." He took a bus to Montana that night. He wanted to split the money with me. I said it was too much and we settled on twenty five grand. It was still too much for what I did. I mean I didn't jump out of a friggin' plane or anything. Just picked him up and stashed his stuff. He took his portion of the money and left everything else here. My part of the money is mostly gone.

NICK
Okay, hold on. A few questions. Did you help O.D. make up the fake bomb he showed the flight attendant?

CARL
Um huhhm. Yeah.

NICK
He had it in a briefcase. What was the bomb made of?

CARL
Some round sticks wrapped with red electrical tape, to look like dynamite. It had wires connected to a battery.

NICK
The hijacker left eight cigarette butts on the plane. Did O.D. smoke?

CARL
A lot.

NICK
What kind?

CARL Ahh, Raleigh.

NICK And he asked for \$200,000 in twenty dollar bills and two parachutes, right?

CARL Four parachutes.

NICK Why four?

CARL Because he knew the odds of getting a faulty parachute were almost 25 percent. He knew the numbers on everything. Wind velocity. Air speed. Altitude. O.D. knew all that stuff.

NICK Are you kiddin' me?

CARL It's all true.

NICK (FRUSTRATED) Carl, be serious. Are you messin' with me? Because if you are, well, that's really low. I need to know, Carl. Before we go any further.

CARL (EARNESTLY) I'm NOT messin' with ya, Nick.

NICK (EXCITED) Oh my god! This is . . . unreal! Can I see this evidence you have in the cellar?

CARL It's about time! Follow me.

NICK Shall we just leave your mom?

CARL She'll wake up later.

MUSIC: FOR TRANSITION?

SFX: INTERIOR. CELLAR OF HOUSE. LOW
CEILING AND EARTHEN FLOOR.
FOOTSTEPS DESCENDING THE STAIRS.

CARL This is the cellar.

NICK Is there a light?

CARL Yeah, let me pull the cord.

SFX: INTERIOR. CELLAR. SINGLE PULL
LIGHT FIXTURE CLICKS AS LIGHT IS
TURNED ON.

NICK Okay, that helps.

CARL Come over here.

SFX: INTERIOR. CELLAR. FOOTSTEPS
CROSS DIRT FLOOR.

CARL O.D. left this stuff with me and he never came back for it. I kept it hidden. I shoulda got rid of it, but I just didn't. I kept thinking O.D. might want it someday.

NICK But he never came back for it?

CARL Nope. Go ahead, open the box.

NICK Am I gonna get blown up?

CARL Find out.

SFX: INTERIOR. CELLAR OF HOUSE.
CARDBOARD BOX WITH FLAPS FOLDED
OVER ON THEMSELVES IS OPENED.

NICK Okay. Now opening the box and I see . .
 . a dark suit . . . and one black shoe,
 covered in dried mud. No way, man! This
 is his suit and a shoe?

CARL Yep. Same suit, same shoes, well,
 missing one.

NICK (EXCITED. HIS DREAMS HAVE COME TRUE.)
 I'll be damned! This is incredible!
 Carl, this is all real?

CARL I told ya. You hit the gold mine, Nick.
 I've got the parachute in a box
 somewhere else.

NICK Oh, man! The actual parachute. You were
 not kidding!

CARL We're gonna want to talk about that
 book.

NICK What's in this manila envelope?

CARL Take a look.

INTERIOR: CELLAR. OPENS HEAVY
MANILA PAPER ENVELOPE.

NICK Money. Looks like five 20-dollar bills.

CARL It's all I have left. The serial numbers
 match the ransom money. It's all legit.

SFX: INTERIOR. CELLAR. PAPERS
RUSTLING.

NICK And what's this paper? (AMAZED) Nooo! No way! The ransom note!? The actual handwritten note!?

CARL Umm, huhmm. That's it.

NICK (READING THE NOTE) "I have a bomb in my briefcase. I want you to sit next to me."

CARL O.D. kept the note. The only thing he left on the plane was his tie.

NICK And eight cigarette butts.

CARL I told O.D. not to smoke on the plane but he was so nervous he had to.

NICK What about the tie?

CARL O.D. bought it, at a secondhand store, in Portland, before we went to the airport. He wanted to leave something behind on the plane to throw the Feds off. The tie would have a lot of fingerprints on it. I thought it was a genius idea.

HOST The black, clip on tie worn by D.B. Cooper was originally purchased at a J.C Penny store. Some DNA traces were found, but nothing to provide a conclusive identification.

NICK But this suit will have YOUR DNA on it!

CARL Of course it will! I put it in the box, Nick.

CARL What? What cigarettes? She doesn't even smoke!

NICK She used to. When you went for beer, we talked a bit and she said she wished she could have a cigarette, but you'd made her quit. I said I'd quit, too. I asked her what her brand was. And you know what she said? Raleigh.

CARL What are you saying, she hijacked the plane?

NICK No, you did. You did it, Carl.

CARL (ALMOST SHOUTING) You don't know what you're talking about, Frick!

NICK Did you know most people who smoke pick it up at home . . . from parents who smoke? And they often smoke the same brand. Raleigh was not a popular cigarette back then. Not many people smoked it. You smoked those Raleighs on the plane, Carl. You're D.B. Cooper.

CARL (DEFENSIVE) That's a bunch of bull if I ever heard . . .

SFX: INTERIOR. CELLAR. A SHARP, RESOUNDING "CLUK" AS NICK IS HIT OVER THE BACK OF HIS HEAD WITH A CAST IRON SKILLET.

NICK (AS HE IS HIT) Arghuh!

SFX: INTERIOR. CELLAR. FRICK'S BODY FALLS TO THE GROUND.

CARL (FRIGHTENED, SURPRISED) Oh no, no, no! Jesus, Mary, and Joseph! Mother! You caved in his head with an iron skillet.

MARGE I HAD to hit him. I woke up. Heard you two talking upstairs. Followed you down here. I don't want to live my last few years alone, with you in prison.

CARL I wasn't going to prison! I told you!

MARGE (ANGRY) I told YOU to get rid of this stuff, Carl, and I told you not to smoke on that damn plane. Now look what's happened. You got caught. I knew you'd confess someday, son. I could see it coming.

CARL (ALMOST SHOUTING) I can't freakin' believe this Mother! Now what are we gonna do?

MARGE Not WE. YOU. (COMMANDING) You're gonna take him to some nowhere spot. Maybe out to Olney. In the woods someplace. Make sure nobody finds him. Hide the car somewhere else.

CARL Yeah, yeah, yeah fine. Then what! Don't you realize this means no book! (HIS ANGER DIMINISHING INTO FRUSTRATION) We could have made thousands of dollars with a book deal. We could have taken that road trip to the Grand Canyon and all those other parks you want to see.

MARGE We can still do that.

CARL With what? We don't have any money!

MARGE (CHANGING THE SUBJECT) So, you told Frick the hijacker was your Marine buddy, O.D.?

CARL (CALMING DOWN) It was the perfect cover, Mother! We were together a lot before the hijack. I could blame it on him.

MARGE (ALSO CALMING DOWN) Why didn't you tell me about the fake story you made up?

CARL Wasn't sure I'd do it. I wanted to see tonight, and when I went for beer I decided I liked Nick and wanted to give him the story. (SARCASTICALLY) You put that to a quick end to that didn't you! Thank you very much!

MARGE Did O.D. really die a month ago?

CARL Yeah.

MARGE I remember him staying with us. Then he went back to Missoula.

CARL The whole time he was here, I never told him about the hijack plan.

MARGE Why?

CARL I was scared about it. Wasn't sure if I'd do it.

MARGE So he found out like everybody else? (NOW SAD). Wish I'd seen his face when he found out. Whatever became of him?

CARL Got married and opened a shoe store in Great Falls. He loved shoes. Had that

place for ten years or so. Then moved to Las Vegas and was a high school English teacher. Got pancreatic cancer and died.

MARGE Ahh, Bless the man.

CARL He liked you a ton, ma. Always asked about you. He loved the fact that you picked me up that night in Woodland and helped me find the parachute I'd hidden in that field.

MARGE (PROUD) I was the one who found it.

CARL I remember. I remember. It was raining like crazy and muddy as a mother.

MARGE (WITH MORE PRIDE) That was a helluva jump from that plane, son.

CARL Yeah, I still dream about it.

MUSIC: FOR TRANSITION

**SFX: EXTERIOR. ASTORIA, OREGON.
NIGHT SOUNDS. SHIP'S HORN IN THE
DISTANCE.**

HOST When Nick Frick didn't return to Portland, family and friends reported him missing. An intensive Police investigation and search found his car hidden inside a stack of crab traps along the Astoria dock. No sign of Frick. He disappeared.

Later, a hunter near Olney found a small Sony recording device in the woods.

Police forensics recovered the interview between Frick and Yurko.

But Carl and Marge are gone. Vanished. Along with the contents of their house in Astoria. No forwarding address. Whereabouts unknown.

Frick's body has not been found. Police think the recorder fell from his pocket while his body was being moved. His interview with a man who could have been D.B. Cooper has not been verified and is gathering its own restless mythology.

MUSIC: FOR TRANSITION

HOST CREDITS/CLOSE

HOST

Sadly, we're no closer to knowing D.B. Cooper's identity, despite our re-imagined speculation in this episode.

But, not knowing, even after more than half a century, is perhaps the best answer, says Daniel Lavelle, writing in *The Guardian*.

SFX: DANIEL LAVELLE STATEMENT

DANIEL LAVELLE

Not knowing seems the whole point of this mystery. Who IS DB Cooper? Whomever you want him to be.

Source: Lavelle, Daniel. "Is He Still Alive? The Mystery of DB Cooper – the Hijacker Who Disappeared." *The Guardian*, June 24, 2025.
<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/jun/24/mystery-db-cooper-hijacker-who-disappeared?>

MUSIC: FOR CONCLUSION

**MUSIC: RIR THEME, ESTABLISH, THEN
DUCK UNDER THE FOLLOWING.**

HOST

You've just listened to "D.B. Cooper's Last Interview," an episode of Re-Imagined Radio.

The cast included . . .

Jodi Lorimer as Marge Yurko

Eric Newsome as Carl Yurko

Gregory Wilson as Nick Frick

Thanks to Tom Vandel (Van-DELL), for permission to use his short story "Last Interview," originally published in his book *The Broken World*. It was a fine experience to adapt his story as a fictional ending for our D.B. Cooper documentary.

Re-Imagined Radio is produced in collaboration with The Electronic Literature Lab at Washington State University Vancouver.

Our programs are broadcast and streamed by partner radio stations KXRW-FM (Vancouver, Washington), KXRY-FM (Portland, Oregon), and KNOM-AM (Nome, Alaska).

Re-Imagined Radio podcasts are available from many distribution platforms. Subscribe and never miss an episode.

Visit our website, reimagedradio DOT FM, where we keep information about all our episodes, as well as lots of interesting EXTRA information about radio storytelling.

Original music composition, sound design, and post-production by Marc Rose.

Graphic design by Holly Slocum and Evan Leyden.

Announcing and YouTube management by Rylan Eisenhauer.

Our social media efforts are managed by Caitlyn Kruger. Follow Re-Imagined Radio on Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, X, Blue Sky, LinkedIn -- and especially our YouTube channel . . . [at sign] reimagedradio.

Re-Imagined Radio acknowledges the debt we owe to previous and contemporary radio artists and hope our curation and stewardship of their artifacts and efforts demonstrates our sincerity.

This is John Barber, producer and host. Thank you for listening.

**MUSIC: RIR THEME UP, THEN DUCK
UNDER THE FOLLOWING**

ANNOUNCER CLOSE

ANNOUNCER

This is a production of Re-Imagined Radio. To learn more, visit our website,

reimaginedradio (all one word, no
punctuation) DOT FM.

Please join us for another episode of
Re-Imagined Radio as we continue our
exploration of sound-based storytelling.

MUSIC: RIR THEME UP, AND TO END.