

Things that could only happen to Peck.



New Company Plane

Lanier and had a company plane that we used for business. The owner of the company, Sorrell Lanier, was a pilot and that was the biggest reason that we had a company plane. Sorrell was a big Alabama fan, so this company plane would often go to Alabama football games. A word about Alabama Football: People always ask me, "You're from Mississippi, so who do you root for?" I would tell them that my wife is a big Alabama fan, and my boss is a big Alabama fan, so where I get paid and where I get laid, "ROLL TIDE!"

Lanier's full-time pilot was John, a retired engineer that flew the plane most of the time, and Sorrell would be the copilot when he was onboard. There's kind of a funny story about John. It was kind of the office bad joke about John dozing off while the aircraft was on autopilot. I asked John about it one time, and he said he had been flying so much and had so many hours, that even though he was dosing off, he could tell when the engine sound changed.

He and I flew together a lot because I was the marketing guy. We would drop engineers off at different locations, then John would take me to other cities and customers. One day, it was just me and John in the plane going from New Orleans to Houston. I noticed that John was starting to doze off, so I started talking more to keep him awake. I told John that I had read recently about a girl who was flying with her father when her father had a heart attack and passed out on the wheel. She had to get him off of the wheel, take the controls and fly this plane. She managed to get someone on the radio that coached her in to landing the plane. I asked John, "Heaven forbid anything ever happens to you while we are flying, but if it does why don't you go through a few things that I should do to fly and land this plane." John thought for a minute and then he said, "I don't give a shit I'll be dead!" That was not exactly what I wanted to hear. John went ahead and told me what I could do was call somebody on the radio and they would talk me into a landing. Fat chance. Thank goodness I never had to do that.

On one particular trip we were flying New Orleans to Nashville. John was flying the plane and Sorrell was the copilot. This was a new plane, a Cessna Conquest, a very complex aircraft and my first time to fly in it. It looked identical to the plane we had before, but just a later model. The other plane had a toilet under one of the seat cushions, so I raised up the seat

to see if it was the same as before, but there was no toilet there. I asked where the toilet was, and Sorrell said he had one ordered. "Okay no problem," I thought.

On the way to Lakefront Airport that morning, I had stopped and bought some donuts for us like I normally do, and a carton of chocolate milk for me. It was about a three-hour flight, and I could see we were getting close to Nashville, because I saw John and Sorrell were really busy with the landing procedures.



That's when I started cramping and breaking out in a cold sweat. I was wondering if it was the two boiled eggs that I had before leaving my house. Whatever it was, I needed to get off this plane and find a bathroom. I crept up to the cockpit and asked, "How long before we land!" They said, "20 minutes." Now, I'm in a bind: I can't hold this explosion that is about to happen, but we don't have a toilet. "It's on order," I muttered to myself.

Now, I'm frantically searching for something that I could use in the plane. The toilet seat was there, but there was just an empty compartment below the seat. I'm thinking about using my briefcase but that would be a big mess. Then, I saw a plastic bag that contained several pilot headphones. I dumped them out and I sat on the seat while holding the plastic bag. While I'm sitting there, John looks back and I can read his lips. He's telling Sorrel, "Peckenpaugh is on the toilet." They were too busy with the approach and landing to bother with me. Everything went fairly well, and I felt a lot better. Now, I have this clear plastic bag that I'm wondering what to do with it. There was one doughnut left so I ate it and put the clear plastic bag in the doughnut box.

When we land at these private Corporate Flight Centers, flight-line workers always come out to assist us. They roll out a red carpet at the end of the steps. When I was coming down the steps holding my brief case in one hand, and the doughnut box in the other, I was looking for the nearest trash can. One of the uniformed young guys that worked there said, 'Sir is that trash? I can take that for you.' I said no, "I'll take care of it," but he kept insisting, so I gave it to him. I think, because it had Doughnuts written on the box, he thought there might be some donuts left. If so, he was in for an unpleasant surprise!



When we got inside the lobby, Sorrell asked me, "What the hell was going on back there in the plane?" I started explaining that I had eaten two boiled eggs and chocolate milk...and he interrupted me and said, "Stop right there. I've heard enough. Let's go to work!"

He never did ask me to tell the whole story. After that, I stopped eating eggs before flying.