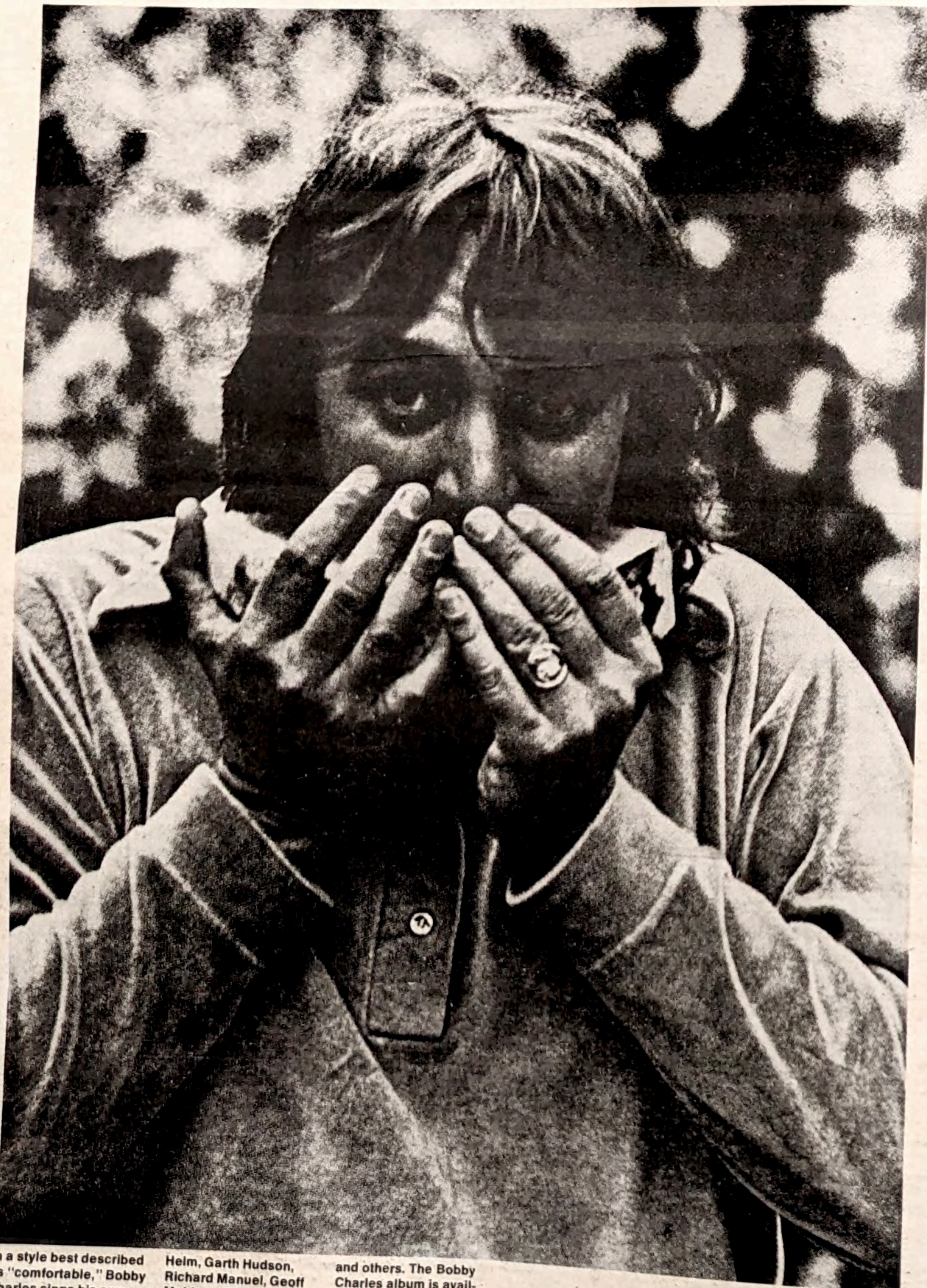


BOBBY

CHARLES

He Plays Dynamite B⁷ Watermelon

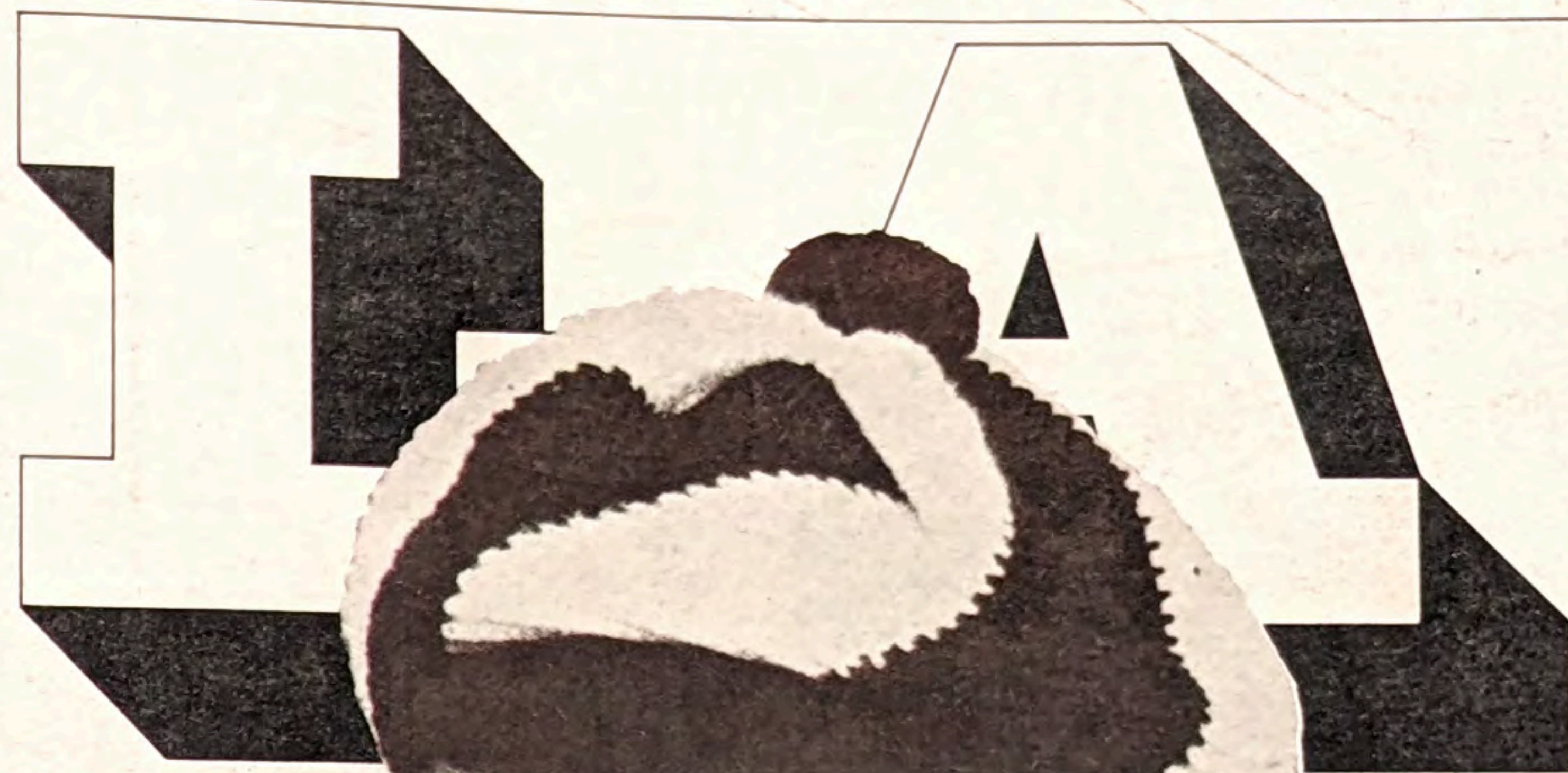


In a style best described as "comfortable," Bobby Charles sings his own songs accompanied by Rick Danko, Levon Helm, Garth Hudson, Richard Manuel, Geoff Muldaur, Billy Mundi, Bob Neuwirth, John Simon, N.D. Smart II, and others. The Bobby Charles album is available on Bearsville records and tapes.



The D.B. Cooper Story

THE SKYJACKER WHO GOT AWAY WITH IT (P. 20)



No. 16 : Oct. 21, 1972

25c

- SUGAR RAY (P.9)
- SOUNDER SOUNDED (P.15)
- GOSEECALGOSEECAL (P.11)
- THE D.A. THING (P.4)
- DIRTY LITTLE RACE (P.5)



D.B. Cooper

THE TALE OF

By Karl Fleming

D.B. COOPER AROSE AT 6 A.M. THAT day, leaving his wife of 25 years asleep in their ranch-style suburban Seattle home, dressed hurriedly in a dark business suit, and packed his briefcase with the tools he would need to carry him through this, the most important day of his life.

Cooper, age 49, a balding unprepossessing out-of-work Boeing engineer, had never been arrested for anything more serious than a traffic violation.

This day, Thanksgiving Eve of last year, he would hijack a Northwest Airlines Boeing 727 between Portland and Seattle, would successfully bail out with \$200,000 of the airline's money, and then would vanish as if evaporated. He still hasn't been discovered by the law.

Cooper planned the hijacking for more than a year. Every detail had been carefully researched. Every step had been painstakingly rehearsed. Every possible foul-up had been anticipated—even marked money and bad weather. Every previous hijacking had been patiently studied. They had all failed, at least by D.B. Cooper's standards. The perpetrators all had been caught, killed or set down empty-handed in some distant place like Cuba.

Cooper was no political fanatic. Nor was he a nut. He was an ordinary, God-fearing, patriotic, country club-oriented, upward-climbing WASP engineer, (salary: about \$25,000 a year) who was motivated by two things: anger, and money. He had no desire to be either hero or martyr. He simply wanted to get the money, and get away.

As he toiled down Interstate 5 that rainy morning, he carefully reviewed what he had stashed in the briefcase to pull the job off: two cheap hairpieces (cost: \$35); an altimeter, a compass, a stop-watch, a walkie-talkie, three small radio transmitters, black gloves, dark wrap-around sunglasses, a make-up kit, a foul weather jacket, a black cap. And a replica of a bomb—three red flares of the type police use to mark auto accidents, wired cleverly together and attached to what appeared to be a detonating device.

In the right-hand inside pocket of his dark business suit jacket, he carried

Karl Fleming was associated with Newsweek magazine as correspondent, Los Angeles bureau chief and contributing editor for 11 years before resigning April 15 to found LA. While with Newsweek, he covered virtually every significant civil rights story of the turbulent '60s, including Birmingham, Selma, Ole Miss, Little Rock and Watts. He covered the assassinations of President John F. Kennedy and his brother Robert and those of Martin Luther King and Medgar Evers. He was assigned to Richard Nixon during the last Presidential campaign and has covered Lyndon Johnson, George Wallace, Hubert Humphrey, Barry Goldwater and Ronald Reagan. He also reported on the Charles Manson and Jack Ruby trials for Newsweek and the trial of Pueblo spy ship captain Lloyd M. Bucher. Early this year, Fleming made contact with a man who claimed to be D. B. Cooper, the only person ever to skyjack an airliner and get away with his identity unknown. In this and the next two installments, Fleming tells what happened.

Copyright © 1972 Platypus Publications

A LONER, D.B. COOPER TELLS HOW HE STOLE PLANE AND GOT AWAY

the hijack note. Under his suit, he wore a heavy sweatshirt. It would be cold that night when he jumped. On his feet he wore high-topped Western style boots. They could pass as dress shoes, and at the same time could protect his ankles when he hit the ground after parachuting from the plane.

Making Plans

As he drove, he listened idly to the radio and methodically reviewed his plan—the landing site, the weather, the timing, the getaway route, all the minute details he had brooded over with slide-rule precision for months. He originally had wanted to bring in a confederate. That would make the job easier, especially if he could get an accomplice who could fly a helicopter and scoop him up when he touched down and rush him to safe obscurity. But he finally discarded that idea. Too risky. A partner might talk. And besides, when the chips were down, could he really count on somebody else? No, he decided.

Cooper was tense, but confident. Since he had worked at Boeing for 15 years, he knew the Boeing more intimately than he knew his motorboat. He had chosen this particular flight in part for that reason: 727s were used exclusively on the Seattle-Portland run, and the 727 was the only airplane in commercial use that opened in the rear, making a parachute jump feasible. And further, the 727 could be slowed down enough

in flight so that a jump could be accomplished without ripping a chute to pieces.

Also, this particular daily commuter flight was chosen because of the route it followed. Cooper chose it after patiently studying dozens of aerial maps. The route, over rural terrain where the land was hilly, but not too rough, was close enough to a freeway to make a getaway possible. It was sufficiently removed from water and high tension lines, which a parachutist always fears, and was remote enough so he could land without detection.

The spot Cooper selected was just east of the tiny farming village of La Center, less than five miles from Interstate 5, and about 30 miles north of Portland. There was water around (Lake Merwin) but Cooper felt he could jump and avoid it, even at night. And there were high-tension lines, but Cooper believed he could see them at night and steer away from them.

The weather was crucial. Cooper wanted a cloudy, overcast and even rainy night. He reasoned that other planes would be dispatched to follow the hijacked craft (C-130s were in fact used), so he wanted cloud conditions and rain, anything that would reduce visibility and make spotting him difficult if not impossible when he bailed out. He couldn't afford to have it known exactly where he was jumping. Hence he needed inclement weather, but not rainy enough

or windy enough to make the jump overly hazardous.

The day he chose was perfect: rainy, overcast and gusty—which would discourage light planes and helicopters from following. And he had chosen this day for another reason. It was a holiday. He had wanted July 4, but hadn't been able to get his plan perfected in time. He wanted a holiday because people in airports would be in a festive mood, there would be huge crowds and a lot of confusion.

The Triangle

Cooper turned off Interstate 5 at Woodland at about 9:45 a.m., drove along the macadam rural road to Main Street in La Center and parked his car in the gravel lot beside the post office.

He applied his make-up—stuff to alter his facial coloring, and white paste to obscure his gold-capped teeth. Then he drove into the adjacent countryside to set his radio transmitters in place. There were three of them, pocket-sized, battery-powered devices which he had talked a friend into making for him. "This friend of mine—this was a long time prior to the execution of this—we were talking, discussing walkie-talkies and transmitters, and he said he could make one up for, I don't know, \$7 or \$8. I said something about how it would be nice, because my pleasure boat didn't have radar on it. And it would be nice if a fellow had a little transmitter because if he were going to a fishing area somewhere and he should happen to get socked in by fog or something he could use the transmitter and home right in. So I said 'sometimes if you are thinking about it how about making me up a couple of these?' So he did," Cooper said.

The tiny radio transmitters each had a small antenna, and each emitted a "beep" signal which could be picked up by a walkie-talkie tuned to the proper frequency. The transmitters were crucial to his plan.

Cooper drove out and placed one of the transmitters in a weed patch near a rural church; he set another one in a ditch beside the road; he left the third one in the trunk of the car. The placement of the three transmitters formed a loose triangle, so that when he received the signal from all three of them on his walkie-talkie, he would know precisely where he was. "I figured I would be able in between the clouds, would be able to see the highway and the lights down there, but I wanted to have that 'beep, beep' signal in case anything went wrong," Cooper said.

A Little Satire

Cooper had made practice runs on the Portland-Seattle flight a half-dozen times, checking the terrain, checking the compass route, familiarizing himself with landmarks and on the final checkride he had placed his small transmitters and had taken his walkie-talkie on board with him. Approaching the planned jump spot, he concealed the walkie-talkie in a pillow and held the pillow up to his ear. Sure enough, when he was over the right place—and could see where he was—the signals began to come in, demonstrating the system would work.

After setting them out on the day of the hijacking, Cooper returned to the post office lot, parked the car, walked

Fleming clandestinely interviewed D.B. Cooper outside Seattle.



A HIJACKING



COOPER BAILED OUT AND



along the road to Woodland, went into a restaurant and had a ham and cheese sandwich and a piece of apple pie, while he waited for the Greyhound bus. He had already purchased a ticket, to Portland, for 90 cents, and had a plane ticket from Portland to Seattle as well.

On the practice flights, he had used several aliases, including Montgomery and Wright. For the big trip, he chose the name D.B. Cooper.

It was a little satire, he said. He had worked at Boeing where noise was always a problem. So he chose the word decibels, and took the letter "D" from it. And what, he said, would make more noise than a lot of decibels in a barrel? Thus "B." And who makes barrels? A "cooper". Thus, D.B. Cooper, just the kind of name a methodical-minded engineer would choose.

When the bus reached Portland, at about 1:45 p.m., Cooper caught a taxi to the airport, arriving at about 2:15. The flight was scheduled to leave at 2:40 p.m. Cooper strolled around the terminal to kill time, then walked directly to the gate, carrying his briefcase. He watched as the check-in line formed, apprehensive for fear federal agents would be at the gate searching hand luggage. There were no such agents present, so Cooper tagged along at the end of the line, so he could get a seat at the back

of the plane. Had there been air marshals on board, which was happening on some flights, he planned just to sit tight and take a normal flight to Seattle. No marshals were on board, however, so Cooper took a seat in the extreme left rear of the plane and just waited.

"I was still safe. I still had the note. I still had the option just to take a ride. But I knew this was the beginning. Right here. All the work that had gone on before, that was just an accessory. Because nobody knew what I was doing. And I wasn't doing wrong to anybody."

"Odd as it may seem, I had prepared for this so long that when it actually took place, it was just like having a dress rehearsal," Cooper said.

The Crucial Flight

Cooper avoided any weapons—he said he dislikes guns—and the way his plan was to go the only person who would even see his "bomb" would be the stewardess. And she would be "scared to death, and wouldn't know a real bomb from anything at all. I could have made it out of paper and she wouldn't have known any difference."

"So, what was the worst that could happen? They could apprehend me. Or, if I got as far as putting the plan into motion, and left the plane with a chute I wasn't familiar with, then the chute

might not open. But other than me, nobody was endangered at any time," Coopersaid.

The crucial flight was about six minutes late leaving. When it was about 10 minutes out of Portland, the stewardess, taking orders for drinks, had worked her way back to Cooper's seat. When she asked him what he wanted to drink, Cooper reached inside his jacket and handed her the note. It was typewritten, on plain white paper, and the message was plain: "I have a bomb in this briefcase. I am hijacking this plane."

The stewardess's eyes widened. "Surprised?" Cooper said. "Just follow my instructions. Exactly! And everything will be fine and no one will be any wiser. Just report this to your captain."

That was the substance, if not the verbatim words, of the conversation. For the next two and a half hours, Cooper and the stewardess were seatmates. He kept her beside him and used her as a courier to take instructions to the captain. When the plane reached Seattle and began circling, Cooper instructed her to go forward and tell the captain "to advise Seatac (Seattle-Tacoma Airport) and Northwest to procure \$200,000 in \$20 bills and four parachutes, and have them at the plane."

While the plane circled, Cooper and the stewardess chatted. "She told me

she was from Minnesota, so we talked briefly about Minnesota and how did she like flying and this sort of thing. But actually, the atmosphere wasn't too conducive to idle conversation. Because I was very keen. I had to be very alert. I didn't want to get lost in conversation."

The captain informed the passengers there was a minor mechanical problem. While the FBI was rounding up the money and parachutes, Cooper sent word that when the plane landed he wanted it parked away from the terminal, in a well-lighted area so he could see out the windows and protect himself from possible ambush. When that was done, and the money and parachutes were delivered to the plane by courier, a bus came out, and everyone deplaned except one stewardess. She was vital to Cooper's plan and was involved in his ordering of four parachutes.

The Order for Two

No one had pulled this kind of sky-jacking before, so Cooper had had some careful planning to do. "The one thing I had to watch very carefully was the chutes. I decided to order two complete sets. Why? Because if they thought I was going out of that plane alone, I wouldn't have given you a plugged nickel for my chances. Because they wouldn't care if I dropped out and went straight

FELL FREE FOR 22 SECONDS...



down. But they wouldn't know if I was planning to take somebody down with me. So I asked them for two complete sets of chutes, two chest packs and two back packs, so they would think that if they gave me a bogus chute they would in effect be signing the death warrant for whoever went with me," he said.

His logic was sound. The chutes were fine. The only slip-up was over the money. Cooper demanded that it be sent out in a suitcase. He had built a special harness to be attached across his pack. He planned to put his suit jacket and some other items into the suitcase, along with the money, and attach it to his special harness so he could

make the jump with his hands free. After all, he couldn't jump carrying the money in his hands. But instead of a suitcase, they sent the money out in a canvas bag, a problem he was brooding about as the plane refueled and took off under his instructions.

He told the stewardess to tell the captain to fly on the normal course to Reno, which he knew would carry him directly over the spot he had selected for his jump. He told the captain to fly at between 7,000 and 10,000 feet, to keep the flaps at 15 degrees (which allowed the plane to fly at a slower speed) and to fly with the rear stairwell open.

The plane took off from Seattle at about 7:30 p.m. It was dark. Cooper ordered the stewardess to go forward to the cabin and lock the door behind her.

As the plane headed southward, Cooper hurriedly got himself together. He put on his luminous stopwatch and compass, donned the black cap and gloves and hurriedly improvised a new means for taking everything he had brought into the plane out with him. Anything he left behind would certainly be evidence.

Therefore, lacking the suitcase he had ordered, he grabbed one of the four chutes, ripped the innards out of it and stuffed the money and his suit coat into

the cavity, and strapped it onto his chest. Then he strapped on his special harness, cut some cord from the discarded chute and tied his briefcase to the harness. Then he strapped on a back chute.

Meanwhile, he was peering out the windows, and could see that the plane was on the correct course southward. About 35 minutes out of Seattle, he could see down between broken clouds and began to pick out familiar landmarks below—the freeway, the power line, the lake. Then he began picking up the radio signals on his walkie-talkie. When he was hearing the signals from all three, he simply walked to the rear of the plane, descended the stairwell, and jumped out.

Free Fall

"I was not vacillating very much," he said. "I remembered why I had come to this point, and all the reasons for it. The long planning. All the research. And the provocation—that was what I was thinking of. It didn't take me long to reflect on this. Just a fraction of a second. Then the die was cast."

When he jumped, his altimeter showed 7,500 feet, and he executed a "free fall" without opening his chute, for precisely 22 seconds which shot him down through a thick cloud bank—thus preventing

He was afraid dogs would spot him and bark when he landed here.



Robert Bruce

EXHILARATION FILLED HIM

the follow-on planes from spotting him. The free fall carried him to about 4,500 feet, where he opened the chute. Below, he could pick up familiar landmarks—fields, barns, roads, and the power line he needed to avoid. The wind was from the east, which was fine. He needed to drift westward, closer to the freeway and his car, anyway. He landed skillfully in a big open field (it was the first jump he had made in several years) fearing only one thing: that dogs might spot him and begin barking. They didn't. He gathered up the white parachute, walked downhill to a weedchoked gully beside a small dirt road and there stashed the money and the chutes.

Then he simply walked up the road to his car, ducking off into the weeds three times when cars passed. When he reached his car, he got in, drove back, collected the money and chute, picked up his radio transmitters, packed everything in the trunk, got on the freeway, and drove home.

Exhilaration poured over him. "I felt like I could have walked all the way to Chicago," he said. "Not only did I have the money, but I had a plan and carried the plan through under conditions that a lot of people would be reluctant to jump in. But then the reaction hit me. I became extremely nervous driving up the freeway. I became almost paranoid. Because if I were ever stopped, if I had to open the trunk, I was dead in the water. I considered stopping and getting rid of all the visible evidence. But where? So I figured the best thing I could do was keep on going. And this is what I did," he said.

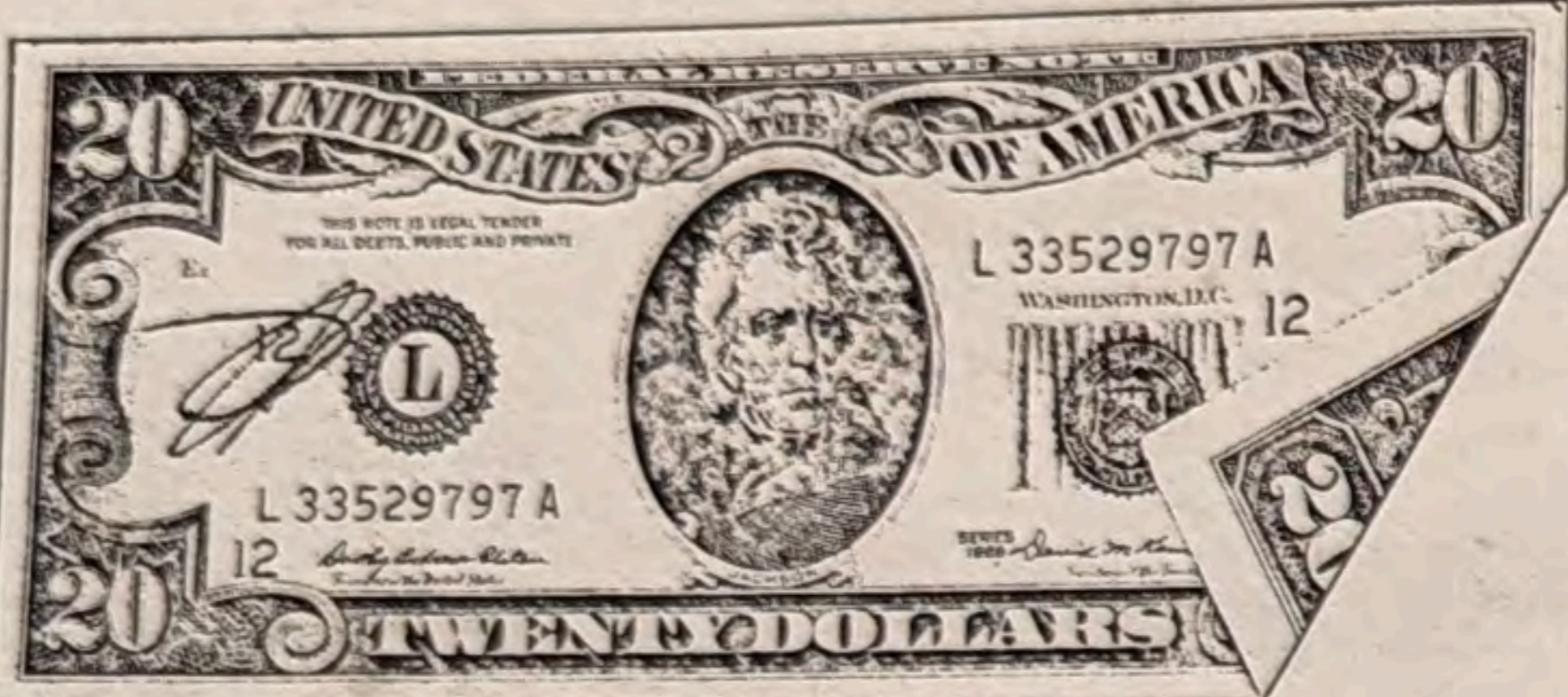
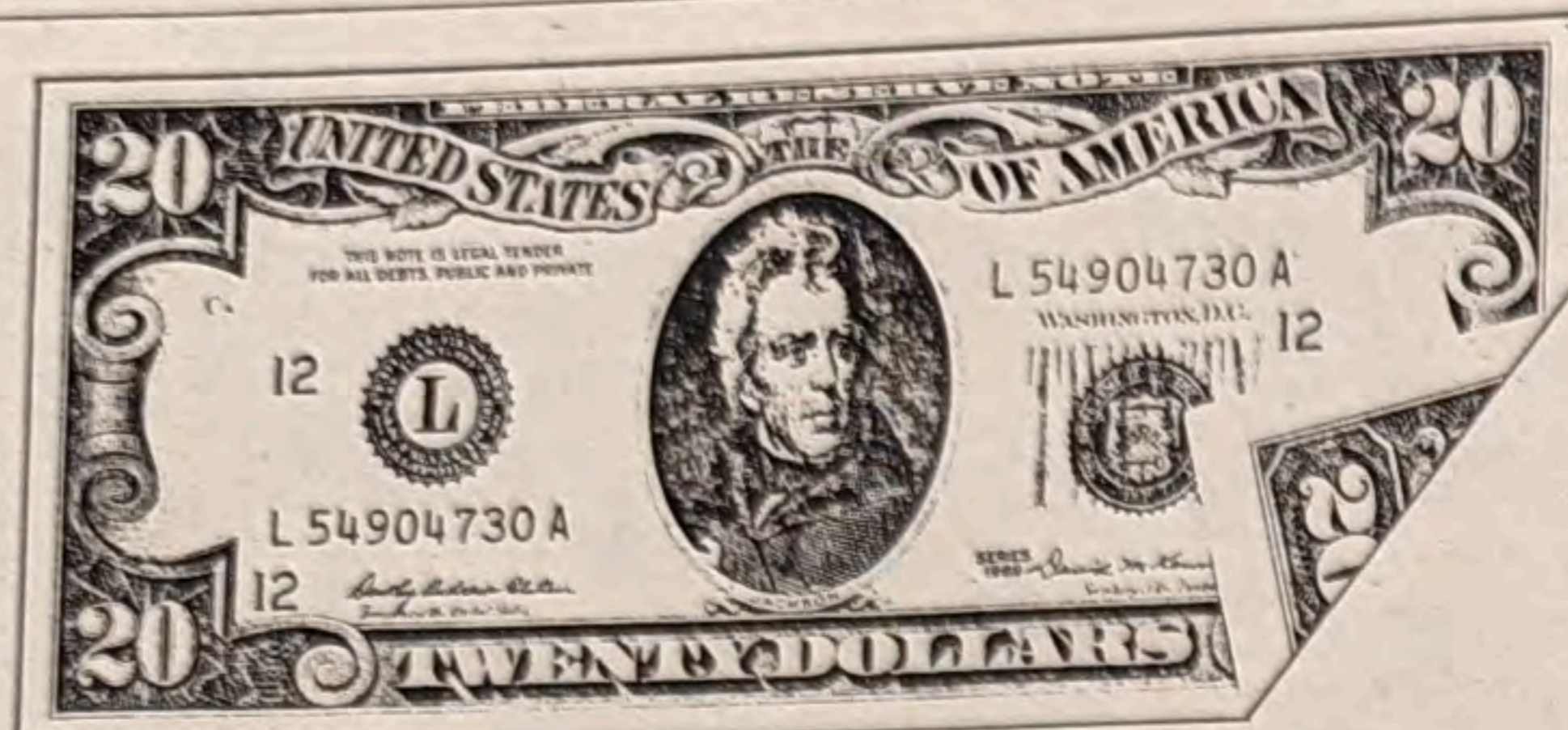
How Did It Go?

What he feared was a roadblock. There was none. In his planning, he had figured that law enforcement wouldn't really begin to react until the next day. It takes a while for a bureaucracy to crank up. So he didn't spot a single lawman all the way home.

He got there at about midnight. His wife awoke long enough to say "How did it go?"

He had told her he was going on a business trip. "The same," he said. "Same old story."

She went back to sleep. Cooper went to the kitchen, turned on the radio and listened to news bulletins about the skyjacking while he had coffee. Then he went out and brought in the money and examined it with a "black" light to see if he could detect whether it had been marked by the law with special paint. It hadn't. He stowed the money



Photostats of three \$20 bills, given to LA editor Karl Fleming as proof of D. B. Cooper's identity, matched serial numbers on the list of stolen bills distributed by the FBI below. Cooper showed Fleming the actual bills, but said the rest of the money was buried in a remote hiding place.

L33 524 933A 69	L54 899 276A 69	L20 150 975A 69
L33 526 898A 69	L54 904 730A 69	L20 153 074A 69
L33 528 092A 69	L54 907 155A 69	L20 154 044A 69
L33 526 279A 69	L54 929 823A 69	L20 163 957A 69
L33 529 797A 69	L54 984 623A 69	L20 168 977A 69
L33 530 471A 69	L54 986 729A 69	L20 175 185A 69
L33 532 853A 69	L54 986 729A 69	L20 177 072A 69

After Cooper hit the ground, he stashed the money and parachutes in this marsh, walked to his car, returned to collect everything, and drove home.



in a shopping bag, and returned it to the car trunk.

Next morning, he drove to a remote spot, burned part of his gear and buried the rest, along with the money, "in a spot where nobody will ever, ever find it." Several days later, Cooper inadvertently discovered that although the money was not marked, authorities had the serial numbers of every \$20 bill he possessed. So though he had the money, he couldn't spend it. What to do? He thought of taking it to Mexico, or Europe, and "fencing" it. But he was an engineer, not a criminal. Therefore, operating on the money, but his life as well. He was furious. He felt he had been double-crossed. Here he had a fortune, and couldn't spend a dime of it.

That is roughly where I came into the picture. The foregoing narrative was related to me by the man I believed to be Cooper in a series of taped interviews in a Seattle motel that ran for some eight hours over a period of three days last February. He also guided me by car over the route of his crime.

It had started when a man calling himself "Seth Thomas" contacted me by phone on the night of Jan. 31, saying he was acting as intermediary for Cooper. He said Cooper was interested in telling his story, but wanted to be paid, because he couldn't spend the money he had stolen. He said he and Cooper realized that the recent Clifford Irving-Howard Hughes hoax would devalue the Cooper story in the minds of potential publishers, but that they had thought and thought and finally agreed on what they considered to be a fair price: \$45,000.

In subsequent negotiations, "Seth Thomas," he soon revealed to me as Jack Lewis, a Bremerton, Wash., real estate promoter, and Cooper showed me three of the \$20 bills they said were part of the \$200,000. I checked the serial numbers against the list distributed by the FBI. They matched. Doubts about whether I had the right man would arise later, but at that moment, I believed he was Cooper. I saw the money, and the incredibly detailed account of the skyjacking which he spun was too logical to be fiction.

Therefore, I paid Cooper \$30,000 for his story. I handed it over in cash, \$20 and \$50 bills, to his intermediary, Seth Thomas, on condition the money be set aside and used for Cooper's legal defense if and when he was captured.

Next week: Why Cooper hijacked the plane, how he contemplated suicide, and why he asked for precisely \$200,000.

Books

Herblock

The News from Washington Is Bad

Herblock's State of the Union, by Herbert Block, (Simon and Schuster: \$6.95).

ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO, the country was ripe with corruption. The Whiskey Ring, including President Grant's private secretary, was conspiring to defraud the government of tax revenues; Jim Fisk and Jay Gould, using Grant's prestige, were trying to corner the nation's gold supply; Vice President Schuyler Colfax was profiting illegally from the construction of the Union Pacific Railroad; and William Macy Tweed, the grafting boss of Tammany Hall, was in control of New York.

Since he joined the Washington Post in 1946, Herblock has been drawing the most consistently intelligent political cartoons in the country. His work has been syndicated and now reaches the readers of 250 newspapers.

State of the Union, the latest collection of his work, is a satirical history of American politics. His cartoons, as usual, cut directly to the core of recent political absurdities and tragedies, from the war



government activities. This is why Herblock's work is as important as any contemporary journalism.

Since he joined the Washington Post in 1946, Herblock has been drawing the most consistently intelligent political cartoons in the country. His work has been syndicated and now reaches the readers of 250 newspapers.

State of the Union, the latest collection of his work, is a satirical history of American politics. His cartoons, as usual, cut directly to the core of recent political absurdities and tragedies, from the war



"The Thin Behind Me (Mr.) Bates" February 11, 1972

Political cartoons of the era were instrumental in throwing the rascals out, partly because many who could vote could not read.

Contemporary America, spattered with the political mud of the ITT scandal, ex-government officials profiting from wheat sales to Russia, the Watergate bugging incident, and a CIA-linked narcotics trade, also demands the satire of irreverent political cartoons, partly because there is too much to read. In an era of political public relations wizards and media over-coverage of many meaningless events, incisive political cartoons are the most direct window into shady

rotating military leaders as being influenced by death and violence. But there is probably no other country in



"Daily Morning Edition" June 12, 1972

which these factors have so strongly affected national leadership as in the U.S. during the last decade." Strong as the passage is, it does not hold the brutal reality captured in the cartoon on the facing page, which shows a dark, smoking snub-nosed revolver above the caption: "American Political Process: '63... '68... '72..."

Herblock's writing is most successful when he relies upon strong visual metaphors, when he draws a cartoon with words. Describing Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird explaining Nixon Administration tactics to Sen. Fulbright after the 1972 bombings of Hanoi and Haiphong, Herblock writes: "It was 'we' against 'them.' As he spoke, he became more fervent, his brows darkened, his eyes gleamed. He seemed caught up in his own game. It was like a man listening to a football game on a transistor radio at a funeral. He was there but there was no connection."

Herblock is a clever writer and his prose offers insight into both the methods and motivation behind his cartoons, but it is the cartoons that will give readers a Rorschach recognition of the country's political ills and convince them that Herblock is right when he writes in the book's Forward that: "The news from Washington is bad."

Terry McDonell

Slide Area

The Slide Area by Gavin Lambert (Ballantine Paperback: \$1.95).

IS THERE A HOLLYWOOD (OR LOS Angeles) Novel? Nathaniel West's Day of the Locusts; the mystery novels of Raymond Chandler; Joan Didion's Play it as it Lays; and the recent but underrated Wedlock by A.J. Langguth, rush forth to answer yes. Hollywood (or Los Angeles) also figures in countless other works of fiction but many of these are distinguished by their unreality in both plot and character. Style and class are needed to qualify for the Hollywood Novel label; all the rest is just gossip.

Gavin Lambert's The Slide Area—recently reprinted as a Ballantine paperback (\$1.25)—has both style and class. Published originally in 1959, it reads today as if it were written yesterday. The passage of time is neither noticed—or missed.

Reported through the sensitive and soft-spoken screenwriter-observer (Lambert himself), we are taken into the worlds of 14-year-old Delia Blow (nee Emma Slack) who wants "...to-get-in-the-movies" (and does); Mark Cusden, product of the British Public School system, awash in the sun and sea; ageless Julie Forbes, Oscar-winner and still the famous movie star; Cliff Harrison, film director, ever-searching for his art; soulful Zeena and her sister Hank, pride of the Santa Monica beach set; Clive Wallace, child of Hollywood; and the Countess Marguerite Osterberg-Stebelch of the Hollywood Hills (with her 40-year old nieces, Pia and Carlotta) of whom it is written:

"Every time I see this aristocratic wreck, I have the impression she has got inside her shoes, her dress, her hat if she wears one, by mistake. And she cannot get out. She is trapped, any movement could be fatal."

These are clearly Lambert's people and he shows them to us with understanding and a deep sympathy. Even amid the sadness and the squalor no bitterness intrudes. And always, receiving equal billing, is the area:

"High lurching cliffs confront the ocean and are just beginning to fall apart. Signs have been posted along the highway. DRIVE CAREFULLY and SLIDE AREA. Lumps of earth and stone fall down. The land is restless here, restless and sliding. Driving inland towards the mountains it is the same: BEWARE OF ROCKS. The land is falling."

On the jacket of this book a blurb by Christopher Isherwood reads: "The most truthful stories about Hollywood and its suburbia I have ever read." He's right.

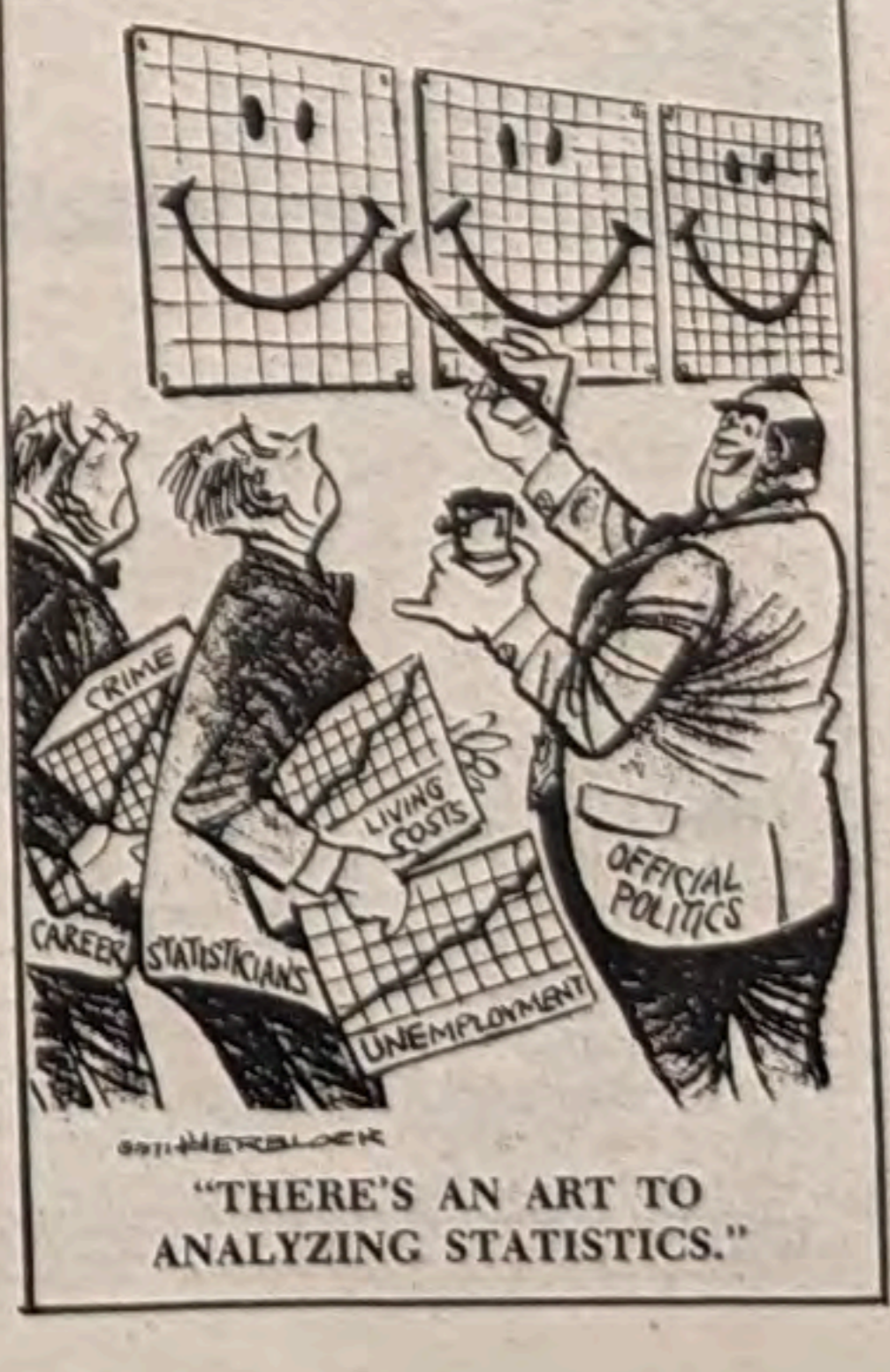
Bill Morosoff



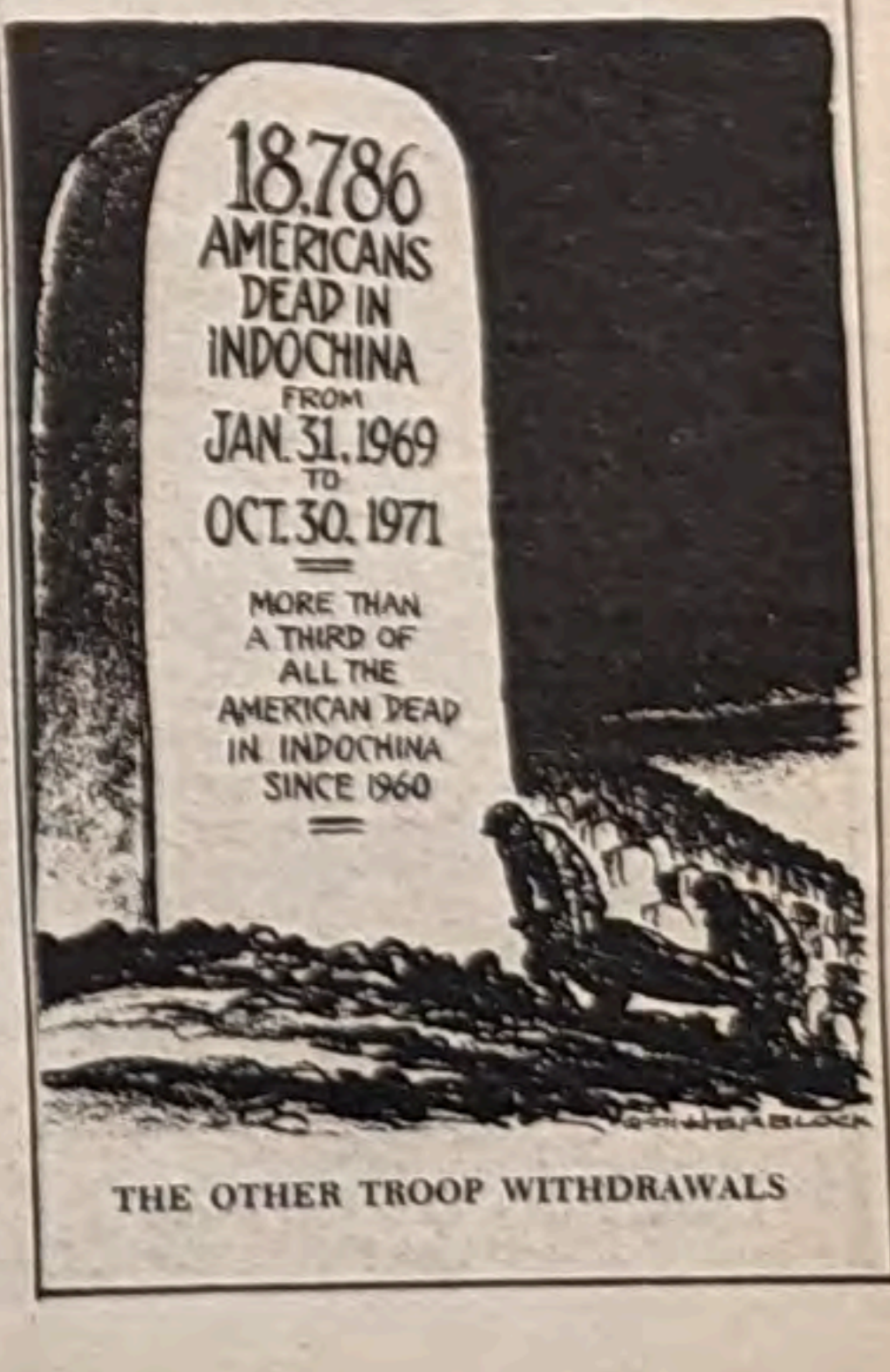
"CALL THE NASA SPACE CENTER—I'VE GOT AN IDEA FOR ANOTHER TRIP BEFORE NOVEMBER 1972."



"GOSH, WHAT IF THEY SHOULD TAKE US UP ON THAT?"



"THERE'S AN ART TO ANALYZING STATISTICS."



THE OTHER TROOP WITHDRAWALS

NEXT WEEK:

Why
D.B.
Cooper
Did It,
And
Why He
Demanded
Only
\$200,000.



LA

1516 Westwood Blvd.
Los Angeles, California 90024

- \$8.00 One-year subscription
- \$10.00 Out of state
- \$13.00 Foreign
- \$15.00 Two years
- \$21.00 Three years
- \$100.00 Life Subscription
- \$2.50 LA Shoulder Bag
- Please bill me.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

THE D.B. COOPER SKYJACKING STORY
Part II: 'Sex Is Better on Payday' (Page 18)

LA

No. 17: October 28, 1972: 25¢

Von Hoffman PAGE 10 Lance Rentzel PAGE 22 Politics PAGE 10

Reporter Faces Jail PAGE 4 Encounter Groups PAGE 12

Joan Didion & John Dunne PAGE 6



D.B. COOPER

WHY HE HIJACKED PLANE FOR \$200,000

By Karl Fleming

In last week's first installment, the man claiming to be D.B. Cooper told how he planned the hijacking for more than a year, how he did it alone, how he decided where to do it, how after he parachuted to earth with \$200,000, he walked to his car and drove home, how he discovered he couldn't spend the money. This week, he explains why he did it.

THREE WEEKS AFTER D.B. COOPER skyjacked a Northwest Airline plane and got away with \$200,000, the following letter appeared in a Reno newspaper:

"I didn't rob Northwest Orient (sic) because I thought it would be romantic, heroic or any of the other euphemisms that seem to attach themselves to situations of high risk. I am no modern-day Robin Hood. Unfortunately, I do have only 14 months to live. My life has been one of hate, turmoil, frustration and more hate. This seemed like the fastest and most profitable way to gain a few last grains of peace of mind. I am not holed up in some obscure backwoods town. Neither am I a psychopathic killer. As a matter of fact, I've never even received a speeding ticket."

Here, the long-trained reporter's instinct suggested, was a man who wanted to talk, to justify, to rationalize and to do verbal penance for his deed.

What he had done was to execute the most daring and ingenious airline hold-up in history—doing it all alone and diving out of the plane with \$200,000 booty—and to all appearances getting away with it. Half the FBI agents in the country were looking for him. Hundreds of military troops fanned out on foot to search the countryside around Lake Merwin, Wash., where it was believed he landed after parachuting. Northwest posted a \$25,000 reward. So no matter how urgently Cooper might have wanted to talk, he would be laying extremely low.

Nevertheless, I brooded, if a reporter could somehow get to Cooper, what a story there was to be had. Not only was the crime daringly unique, but Cooper's letter suggested an extremely uncommon and thus potentially fascinating motive. If a reporter was good at his craft, he looked for this extra dimension in a story—a situation or an occurrence of an extraordinary nature that instantly crystallized some aspect of the human spectacle.

Given the intensity of the search for Cooper, however, what real hope was

there that he would surface and expose himself to capture? If Cooper was smart enough to essay such a slickly pulled-off crime, he doubtless would be smart enough to know with what appetite agents of the law were seeking his capture. His getting away with it, after all, would only encourage others to mimic his deed, at God knows what cost to the airlines in hard dollars, and possibly in human life.

Advertise!

Still, there remained the fact of the letter. After several days of pondering, I decided to try a scheme I had successfully used once before to lure from hiding a member of a secret under-

ground revolutionary bomber group to tell his story: advertising.

Accordingly, I placed a classified advertisement in several Pacific Northwest newspapers, addressed to Cooper, inviting him to contact me, and assuring him we could talk without exposing him to capture. An imprudent and wasted effort, probably. I had not been one to shy away from risks. No only was there but a tiny chance Cooper would respond, but a minefield of booby-traps and pitfalls lay in wait. I would be working alone and underground, outside the law, treading a delicate constitutional line. If I found Cooper, would I have constitutional privilege as a reporter to keep my source of information

secret? Or would I be obligated, as a citizen with knowledge of a crime, to turn Cooper in?

Moreover, suppose in fact someone came forward representing himself as Cooper. How could I know he was the right man? After all, the Clifford Irving hoax was much in the press. How could I be sure someone wouldn't try the same scheme on me? There was one way, it seemed, to prove his identity: if Cooper responded to my ad, I could demand that he produce the money from the skyjacking. That would be strong proof.

Preparing for such an eventuality, I obtained the 34-page FBI booklet containing the numbers of every one of the stolen bills. The FBI was circulating it to banks and other money institutions.

Midnight Phone Call

Then an entire month passed. The few respondents to the ad were cranks. Nothing more. Then on the night of Jan. 31, precisely at midnight, my phone rang and when I answered a voice said: "This call is from the Pacific Northwest."

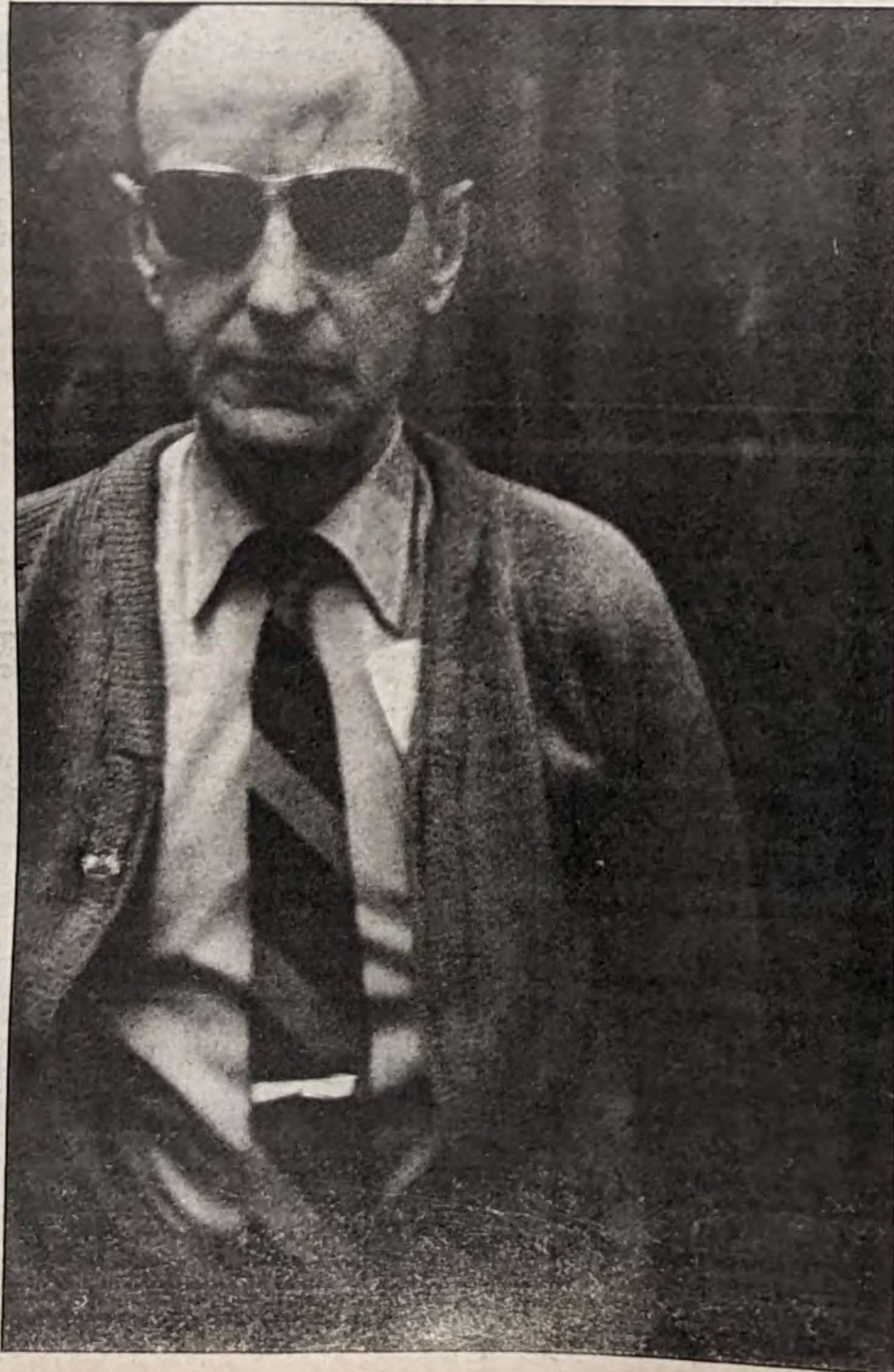
I was fully awake in an instant and said "Don't say a word more. Call me tomorrow night at 9 o'clock and I will have made arrangements for us to talk on a safe telephone."

As is many a reporter who has been involved in hairy, dangerous stories (I had covered Birmingham, Selma, Jackson, Watts, and four assassinations) I was careful almost to the point of paranoia about telephone tapping. Once down South, a reporter friend was dictating his integration story to his office by long-distance call when a voice, obviously white, probably cop, broke in and said "You goddamned nigger-loving son-of-a-bitch."

One learned to be careful about phones. By next morning, I had arranged an elaborate system involving four phones: my answering service was in-

KARL FLEMING was associated with Newsweek magazine as correspondent, Los Angeles bureau chief and contributing editor for 11 years before resigning April 15 to found LA. While with Newsweek, he covered virtually every significant civil rights story of the turbulent '60s, including Birmingham, Selma, Ole Miss, Little Rock and Watts. He covered the assassinations of President John F. Kennedy and his brother Robert and those of Martin Luther King and Medgar Evers. He was assigned to Richard Nixon during the last Presidential campaign and has covered Lyndon Johnson, George Wallace, Hubert Humphrey, Barry Goldwater and Ronald Reagan. He also reported on the Charles Manson and Jack Ruby trials for Newsweek and the trial of Pueblo spy ship captain Lloyd M. Bucher.

The man who says he is D. B. Cooper.



Robert Blue

The D. B. Cooper Story, an artist's conception of what he says he was, is, and might be: a Boeing engineer, a skyjacker riding the plane he parachuted from; a vacationer enjoying his spoils; or a convict, caught and dispatched to jail.

COOPER THOUGHT ABOUT SUICIDE BUT IN THE CHURCH IT'S A SIN

structed to take the call and refer it to another number, where a friend was standing by with instructions to take the call, refer the caller to yet another number—where I was waiting—and then get out of the house. In case the call was traced to that number, the friend would be absent if anyone came knocking.

At 9 p.m., I was waiting, and at 9:10, the phone rang. The caller identified himself as "Mr. Thomas" and said he was acting as an intermediary for Cooper. He said Cooper was interested in explaining to the American people the reason for the skyjacking, but Cooper was having a hard time financially. He wasn't able to spend the \$200,000, for the money was hot. The FBI had the numbers of the bills, therefore, he wanted to sell his story for \$45,000, to be paid in three segments: \$15,000 when I was sure I had the right man; \$15,000 when my interviews were completed (he suggested a filmed interview, with masks); and \$15,000 upon publication of the story.

Seth Thomas Shows Up

Next week, the intermediary came to Los Angeles, and we met at the Airport Marina Hotel, where I had taken a room. "Seth Thomas" was a plodding, black-haired, spade-bearded real estate broker and investment counselor—or so he described himself—and he brought with him several Polaroid photographs of his client, pictures that looked remarkably like the composite drawing of D.B. Cooper which the FBI circulated to newspapers. He also produced a paper containing three serial numbers, which coincided with three numbers on the FBI list.

That, I told him, was hardly real proof, for nearly anyone could obtain the list and copy numbers out of it. How about the real bills?

As we dickered over the interview fee, he promised the real bills would be produced. We agreed on a price, \$30,000, and on Feb. 15, I nervously boarded a Western flight to Seattle, carrying cameras, two tape recorders, and \$30,000 in \$20 and \$50 bills, concealed in several envelopes and buried in my tennis equipment case.

Shortly after checking into The Sweet Wing Motel near the Seattle airport, Thomas arrived, and minutes later, Cooper himself appeared, entering my room furtively from the parking lot. He was a nervous, slightly-built, balding middle-aged man who wore a black raincoat, black shoes and black gloves. He kept the gloves on while he chain-smoked filter cigarettes. He spoke in a raspy voice that reminded me instantly of the *Pueblo* spy ship commander Pete Bucher.

Cooper was anxious to have the money handed over. But I insisted on seeing the real money, whereupon Thomas extracted a wallet and produced three crisp \$20 bills. I checked their serial numbers against the FBI list. They matched.

Cooper asked if I would like to have the three \$20 bills. "And I have \$199,940 more of them buried in the ground that I will be happy to give you in exchange for other bills," he said. I told him I didn't think I wanted to have any stolen bills in my possession.

I continued to hesitate, prodding Cooper to yield up details of the hijacking—few of which had appeared in the press. He began hesitantly, but soon convinced me I had the right man. Subsequently I handed over the money, with the stipulation that it be held for Cooper's legal defense were he caught. What helped convince me was what Cooper said was his motive.

He was raised in an authoritarian Catholic household, Cooper said, and

felt guilty even when stealing cookies from a jar when he was a child.

He had been married to the same woman for 25 years, had never cheated on her once, belonged to the country club, the PTA and had been so faithful an upward-aspiring engineer at Boeing that he carried two cheese sandwiches to lunch every day, and often toiled into the night at his job. He was a perfect Free enterprise specimen.

Feathers His Neck

Item: "You don't laugh at motherhood. You don't laugh at tradition, at religion, at everything possible that a man could hold dear," he said.

Item: "When you're at the football game and somebody gets up and sings the 'Star-Spangled Banner,' it still makes the feathers come up on my neck when I hear it."

Item: "When I had my first sexual experience with a girl, I was 17 years old. This was an older woman. I was so dumb. I was drinking beer with her. I was away from home and it was Christmas Eve. We went to her apartment. She asked me if I wanted to play cards. So I said 'sure.' So we're playing strip poker. For real. So, the next thing, I had to go to the bathroom and when I came back, she was in bed. So I said 'Well, I guess I'll be going, Irene.' And she said 'Oh, it's cold in here. If you'd just come over and warm me up a bit.' Well, I'm a pretty sharp fellow. I just got in, clothes and all. I took my shoes off. That's all. I'll tell you what: she gave me an education before I was much older."

Item: "A woman is different from a man. A woman comes from some other place. She comes from the land of Nod or something... If a man doesn't take the dominant role in the bedroom, there's something wrong with him. A man can go out into an alley or the back of a car or something. But a woman has to have some feeling of security in her lovemaking."

Item: "A man's feeling of manhood, his masculinity, is directly associated with his ability to provide for himself and to earn a good living. When all of sudden he is unable to do this, if he has been a red-blooded man who stood on his feet and worked all his life and asked no quarter from anyone, asked for nothing, then you in effect have emasculated this man. It means cut the balls off him."

Item: "I guess you would have to say that sex is better on payday."

Item: "You work hard for Dear Old Ironworks and do a good job and put in your years there and do the best you can and make money for them and get along well with everyone and you will be rewarded. Because besides your pay check and your annual leave and your vacation, if you get a little higher up, you can look forward to a bonus and the pension and be well-fed and, of course, you'll get the gold watch or whatever."

That was D.B. Cooper, and that was the way he had lived his life, patiently hoeing out the row, obeying the rules, and waiting to cash in on the American Dream, as advertised.

Bitter Payoff

His payoff, he related bitterly, came one day when he went to his Boeing desk and found a pink slip of dismissal. He was crushed.

"It made me feel just like the first time I jumped out of an airplane... just bereft of everything that's inside you, that's all," he said.

He was being replaced, he discovered, by a man 15 years his junior, a junior man he had carefully trained. He had been a believer, an unquestioning cog, but now a jolt of hard truth hit him: "You're dead wood. If they could, they'd

phase out everybody in their 40s because it would be cheaper, and better economics to keep the young blood coming in. If you can suck the last drop of gray matter from the ones you're going to dump and put it into the brains of the younger ones, then see how much more money you're ahead!"

The first shock passed, and Cooper realized that his situation—though he had a \$300 a month mortgage on a suburban home, two cars, a boat, a camper and two children to support—wasn't too bad. After all, this executive at Northwest, upon whom occasionally Cooper paid service calls, had "made a standing offer that any time I wanted to change companies...it would be great to have me on the Northwest team." The Northwest man had been buttering him up, courting him even.

So Cooper telephoned him. The secretary said he was on another line and would call back. When he didn't, Cooper phoned again. He was not in the office, the secretary said, but she would have him call. He didn't. Cooper telephoned again. He was in conference, the secretary said. Finally, another bolt of truth: his old pal at Northwest, his occasional golf partner, was avoiding him. There would be no job.

As the out-of-work days passed, Cooper began dipping into his savings, and thinking of what he would do with the rest of his life. His pride had been hurt. "Any man who gets up and goes to work in the morning is a proud man," he said. He had been fired, so he suffered constant embarrassment.

"People look at you with a sympathetic eye, and this is the thing that kills you. Sympathy is the one thing I could never stand all my life."

Abortive Business Attempts

He tried to get a construction company going, but couldn't raise the capital. He made an abortive attempt to go into the house trailer business, but he had no money.

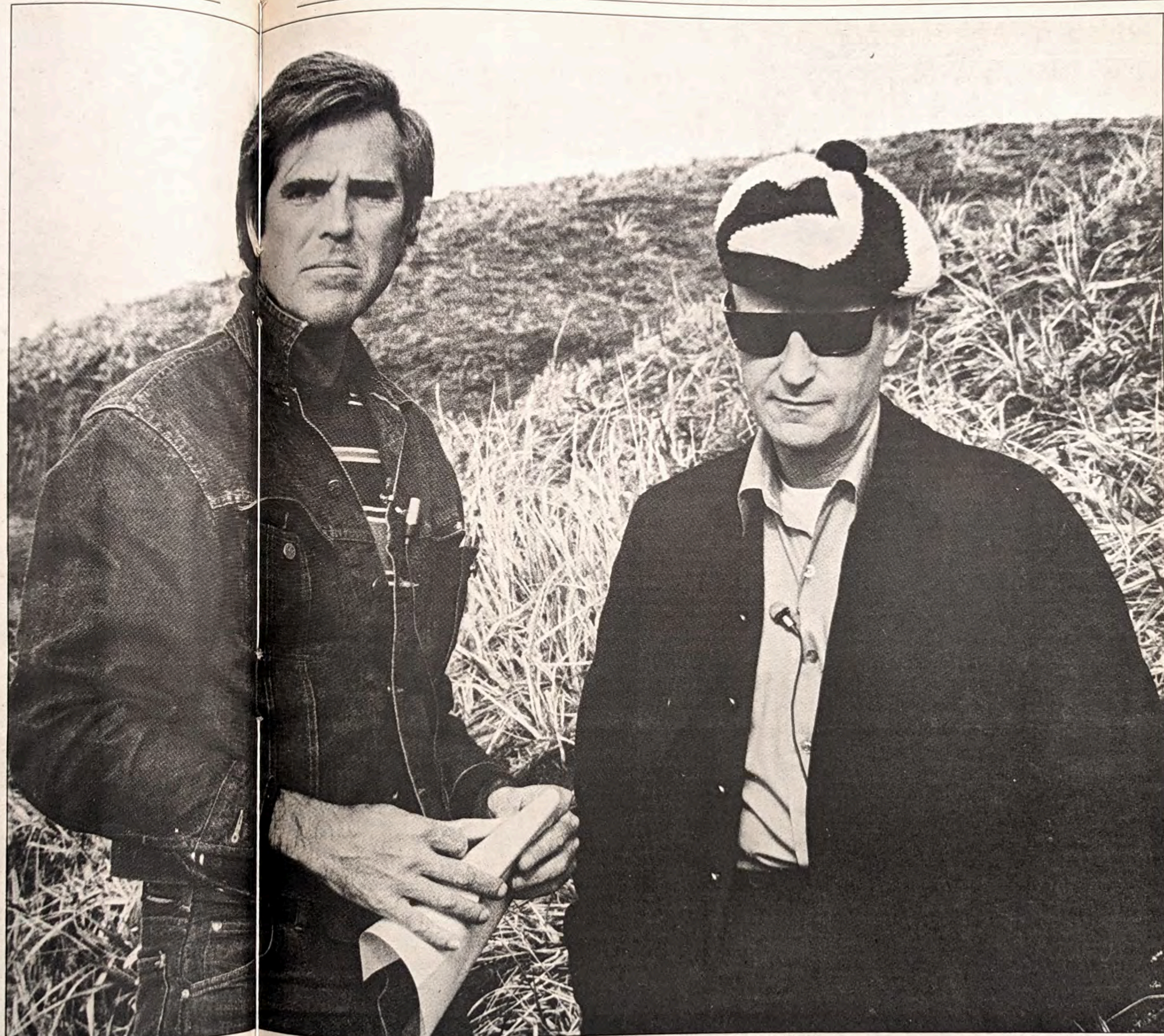
Finally, he gritted his teeth and did something inimical to everything he stood for: he went to the unemployment office. A typically crisp, impersonal, juiceless woman bureaucrat, he said, coolly interrogated him about his qualifications, then suggested he take a job as an "aide." He left in a boiling rage. The humiliation of that experience, the anger at being fired and tossed on the junkheap, the betrayal of his friend, they all came together at once and washed over him in tear-scalding anger.

He couldn't get work. His pride was deteriorating. He began to contemplate suicide. Pills, he finally decided, would be the way. He tried, but he couldn't do it. The Catholic Church had instilled too strongly in him that suicide, like marital infidelity, is a sin.

At home every day, he read a lot of newspapers. They were full of hijacking stories, which he read after vainly searching the classified job section.

"So then, I started thinking about it," he said. "The more I thought about it, the more I thought how easy it would be. Because the security is very weak, very lax, almost non-existent. So I started to organize, mentally, to do this. I would go on with everyday living. But I would begin to think about this in earnest."

Then followed a period of moral wrestling. "There's the code: you can't take what's not yours. But wait a minute. Who says it's not mine? Where would this money come from? Either the stockholders or the company that insures them. Now, wait a minute. Insurance. Who has a strangle hold on the American economy? Insurance companies. And



Karl Fleming and D. B. Cooper

the insurance companies, they're trying to hide the money. They're buying land. They're loaning money. They're building skyscrapers. They're into everything. And then you get thoughts like: how many millionaires made \$1 last year and didn't pay taxes. And look at the oil companies. I could put the money I would steal down as a depletion allowance," Cooper said.

So he planned. "I didn't want to give anything I had up, and in order to even maintain what I had, I had to do something. And then I was, if you'll pardon the expression, very much pissed off right then. So more and more, I planned, for over a year, and still I was not sure I would go through with it. But my bitterness was changing to hard cynicism."

If he did it, how much money would he ask? Had he worked at Boeing to retirement, his annual income, with company

benefits and his few investments, would be about \$12,000. He went to "Seth Thomas," investment counselor, who had approached him several times previous about putting his money into land.

How much of a capital sum, Cooper asked, would a man have to invest to yield an annual income of about \$12,000? Thomas took his pencil and worked it out: \$250,000. Cooper thought about it, but then decided his needs were modest, so he scaled down the figure to \$200,000. And that was how he decided to hijack the plane for \$200,000.

After relating how he hijacked the plane and drove home in his car with the money, he insisted he didn't feel guilty over the crime, or over the possibility that he might encourage others to stage hijackings, until someone got killed.

"I took what I figured was mine, not

even all of it. I had more coming than that, I didn't do anything wrong," he said.

Wax in Ears

When we finished some eight hours of taped interviews, he put on make-up and a wool cap and allowed himself to be filmed by a freelance cameraman and soundman I had brought up after instructing them to hear nothing, see nothing, ask no questions. I made them stick wads of wax into their ears while I interviewed Cooper, and made them turn their backs from the camera when he raised the photostats of the stolen bills to be filmed.

That afternoon, we rode—along with Seth Thomas, whose name I now knew to be Jack Lewis—down Interstate 5, and he showed me all the key spots in the hijacking. As we drove, he talked about his future. Would he get back in

the rat race again? Or would he fulfill his fantasy and travel?

"If anything, I've done the people a favor," he said. "I've shown them that it can be done. You don't have to be the stereotyped individual that hijacks planes. You don't have to even raise your voice. You don't have to use any violence. You don't have to use any threats, and you can still tell that plane where to go and not jeopardize all those people. I showed them their screening system doesn't work."

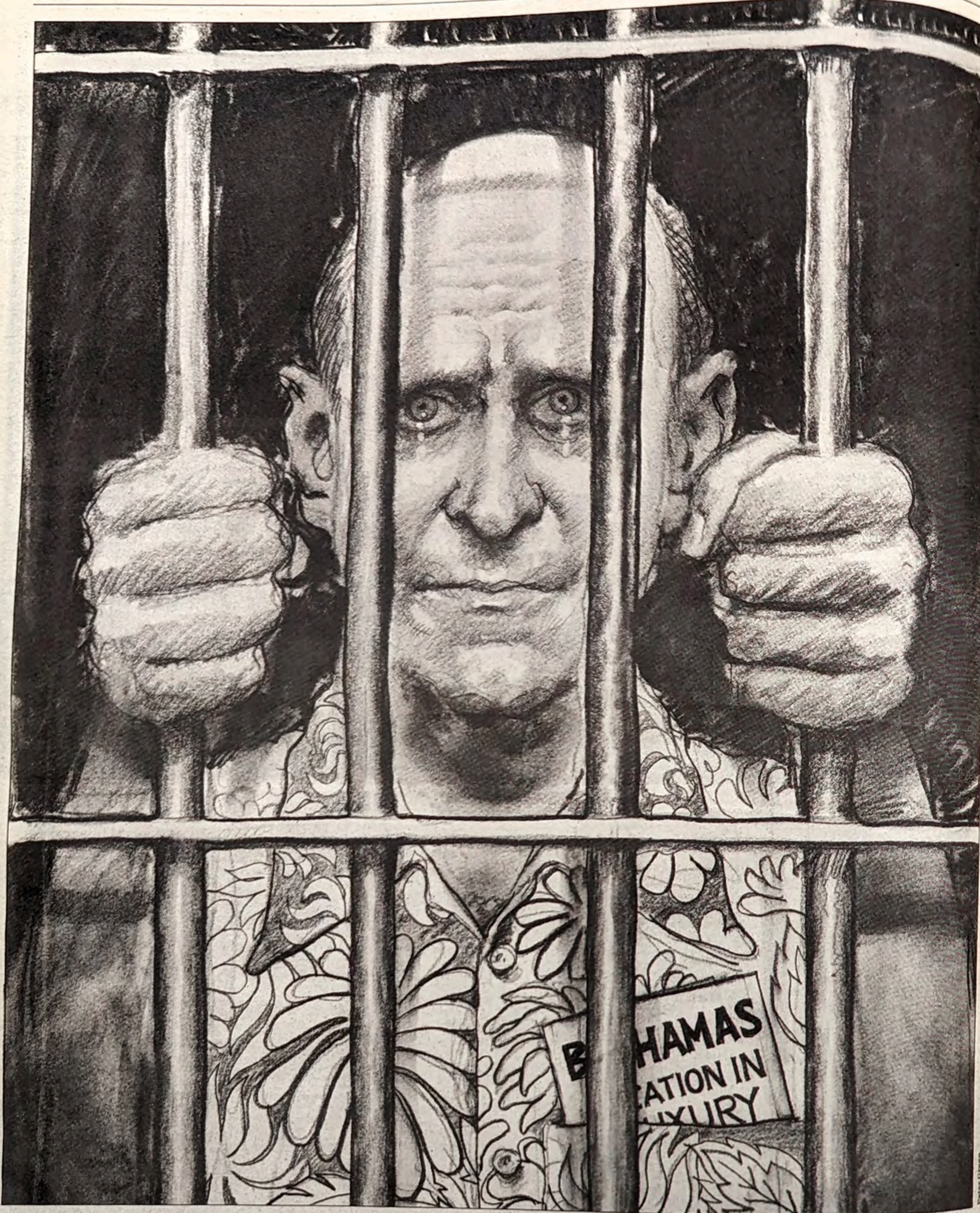
He "never dreamed I would be saying anything against the Establishment" but here he had hijacked this plane in a cold vengeful rage. Now he had a message "to the younger generation that wants to shoot everybody over 30. They've botched every single one they've ever done, with all their bombings and all their riots and cold-blooded murders

and their escape through drugs. Well, I showed them. I'm not over the hill. I can make another jump tomorrow. I can make one 10 years from now, God willing. You bet."

And: "I proved to the Establishment that I'm not just a faceless number. I'm a person. I'm a human being. I proved that Old Dad can still do it."

Jubilantly, I packed my film, my tapes, my copies of the bills and headed home. I was still euphoric when the plane reached Los Angeles. I felt that if I never wrote another story, I had justified my existence, by creating something worthwhile, something that would stand—I presumed to imagine—as a classic commentary on American society.

NEXT WEEK: a gift, a book publisher's betrayal of trust, some indictments, and the growing suspicion that it was all a hoax.



Will This Happen to the Man Who Says He Is D.B. Cooper? **NEXT WEEK: THE AFTERMATH**

LA

1516 Westwood Blvd.
Los Angeles, California 90024

- \$8.00 One-year subscription
- \$10.00 Out of state
- \$13.00 Foreign
- \$15.00 Two years
- \$21.00 Three years
- \$100.00 Life Subscription
- \$2.50 LA Shoulder Bag
- Please bill me.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____

ZIP _____

THE D.B. COOPER SKYJACKING

Part III: Doublecross Leads to the FBI

Election Predictions ★ **Another ITT Scandal** p. 15

Irwindale Blackmail Caper ★ **A Child of War** p. 5

LA

No. 18 : Nov. 4, 1972 : 25¢

PEACE



IS D.B. COOPER THE

LEGAL TROUBLES, MORAL PROBLEMS

STOP PUBLICATION OF THE STORY

By Karl Fleming

In the previous two segments of this series, the man who called himself D. B. Cooper described how he singlehandedly hijacked a Northwest Airlines plane last Thanksgiving Eve and parachuted to safety with \$200,000, and why he did it—mainly to prove he wasn't "over the hill," the implied message he got when he was fired by Boeing where he had worked for 15 years as an engineer. He showed author Fleming three of the stolen bills, and told part of the story, whereupon Fleming paid him \$30,000, and then got the rest of the story in vivid detail on tape and film. In this concluding installment, Fleming tells what happened after that.

THE NOON MAIL OF MARCH 24 brought a convivial note from D. B. Cooper's intermediary, "Seth Thomas," whose real name is William John (Jack) Lewis. "Best wishes on the marriage," he wrote. "Hope you have received the gift. That hat rack came around The Horn to Bainbridge Island in Puget Sound in 1853...I'll keep you posted of any newsworthy stuff."

Lewis was a candid Babbitt who said he had aligned himself with Cooper just for the money. "I'm strictly a percentage man," he said. He was negotiating and acting as planner and arranger for Cooper, who professed to want to lie low rather than risk capture. Lewis said he went to Cooper's suburban home one night just before Christmas—about three weeks after the skyjacking—and while he and Cooper were sitting in the den discussing an investment plan, he looked up and noticed two skydiving trophies on Cooper's mantel.

The skyjacker was obviously an experienced parachutist. The news reports had all said so. Suddenly it hit him.

"Say, you wouldn't happen to have about \$200,000 in \$20 bills that you can't spend," Lewis said to Cooper.

Cooper blinked once, then replied calmly: "Well, what if I did. What could a fella do with that money?"

The FBI had, and was circulating, the numbers of all the stolen bills.

Some days later, both of them saw

KARL FLEMING was associated with Newsweek magazine as correspondent, Los Angeles bureau chief and contributing editor for 11 years before resigning April 15 to found LA. While with Newsweek, he covered virtually every significant civil rights story of the turbulent '60s, including Birmingham, Selma, Ole Miss, Little Rock and Watts. He covered the assassinations of President John F. Kennedy and his brother Robert and those of Martin Luther King and Medgar Evers. He was assigned to Richard Nixon during the last Presidential campaign and has covered Lyndon Johnson, George Wallace, Hubert Humphrey, Barry Goldwater and Ronald Reagan. He also reported on the Charles Manson and Jack Ruby trials for Newsweek and the trial of Pueblo spy ship captain Lloyd M. Bucher.

Copyright © 1972 Platypus Publications

my classified ad in the *Seattle Times*, and decided to make contact with me—purely to sell Cooper's story for money. Having sold it, they expressed a desire to keep in touch. Before leaving Seattle after my interviews, I asked Lewis, who said he was an engineer, to send me



The FBI's D.B. Cooper

aerial maps showing the area where Cooper claimed he landed, 30 miles north of Portland. When the maps arrived, they came in a package containing a worn brass and wood hat rack—that being the antique "Gift" Lewis mentioned in his letter.

By the time he wrote, I had resigned from *Newsweek*, had been married, and had completed the backbreaking job of transcribing the eight-odd hours of taped conversations with Cooper. Ordinarily, a reporter doesn't do that. He

takes notes, and if he uses a tape recorder, he merely selects nuggets from the tapes as he plays them back.

But this was important stuff. I had, in fact, recorded my clandestine conversations with Cooper with two tape machines. I also had a 30-minute filmed interview with him, as well as several rolls of film, and photostats of some of the stolen money.

Curtain Act

Originally, I saw the Cooper story as but a fitting curtain act at *Newsweek*, which I was leaving, with mixed emotions, after 11 eventful and satisfying years. And it would be, if the timing

REAL D.B. COOPER?

happened to be right, a fitting curtain-raiser for LA. It soon became apparent, however, that the newspaper would not be launched in time to have the story.

Another possibility arose. The best man at my wedding was a trusted old friend from the South, Charles Morgan Jr., a brilliant and courageous civil rights lawyer who had been a classmate of George Wallace at Alabama and later infuriated Wallace and other such prehensile hatemongers by legally representing blacks trying to get into white Alabama schools.

When Morgan arrived, I explained the story to him. He had agreed to legally advise me. He said I should try to get the story into print as soon as possible, in order to prevent even the appearance that I was overstepping my Constitutional rights as a reporter by withholding information about a wanted criminal. As he saw it, I didn't have a legal obligation to turn Cooper in, only to print my story as quickly as possible, and then possibly turn over my information to the authorities.

Morgan said, and I agreed, that the story seemed a natural for a book. Mor-

gan had recently represented Col. Anthony Herbert, the officer who spoke out on military scandal cover ups, had done a book with him. He suggested I contact Col. Herbert's agent, Gerard McCauley, in New York.

There were enormous problems ahead, complicating either publication of a magazine article or a book. There was a possibility, of course, that the whole story was a fraud, a la Clifford Irving. Cooper had readily and thoroughly answered every question I asked him, and I asked him some pretty tough ones over three days of intense interviewing, ques-

tions I didn't believe anyone—say, a con man—could have predicted. The details he spun on the performance of the crisis, and his motives for doing it, were endless.

He yielded up so much information, in fact, that I soon felt I knew a lot more than I wanted to know—details, I believed, that would result in his being captured if they were published. I urged him to turn himself in and take his chances with 12 fair-minded jurors who might be impressed with the story of why he said he did it—out of rage and out of a desire to prove he wasn't the used up old man Boeing implied he was when the company summarily fired him at age 49.

He said he'd think about it. He said, meantime, he wasn't worried that any details he'd given me would endanger him. He just said he didn't want to talk to me anymore until after the story was published.

Criminal At Large

Contemplating publication, I was in a dilemma. To print it would lead most certainly to Cooper's capture. For the law to catch Cooper would be fine, but for him to be caught on the basis of information I had gathered as a reporter? I didn't like it. Nonsense, Morgan urged, the man was criminal; he knew what he was doing: so print the story and quit worrying about it. I couldn't. At one time, I strongly considered destroying all the tapes, photos, notes—everything—and forgetting the story. That posed a grim prospect: I would thus forfeit Constitutional press freedom protection and would be guilty of actually destroying evidence. I had seen enough brutal jails from the outside to know I didn't want to see one from the inside.

In any case, it seemed important to publish the story. If it was true, Cooper's account of how he robbed the airline, and the eloquent explanation of why he did it—striking back at the Establishment for selling him an American Dream that turned out to be a nightmare—seemed an important if perhaps cliched commentary on the problems of mass production capitalism. And Madison Avenue huckstering.

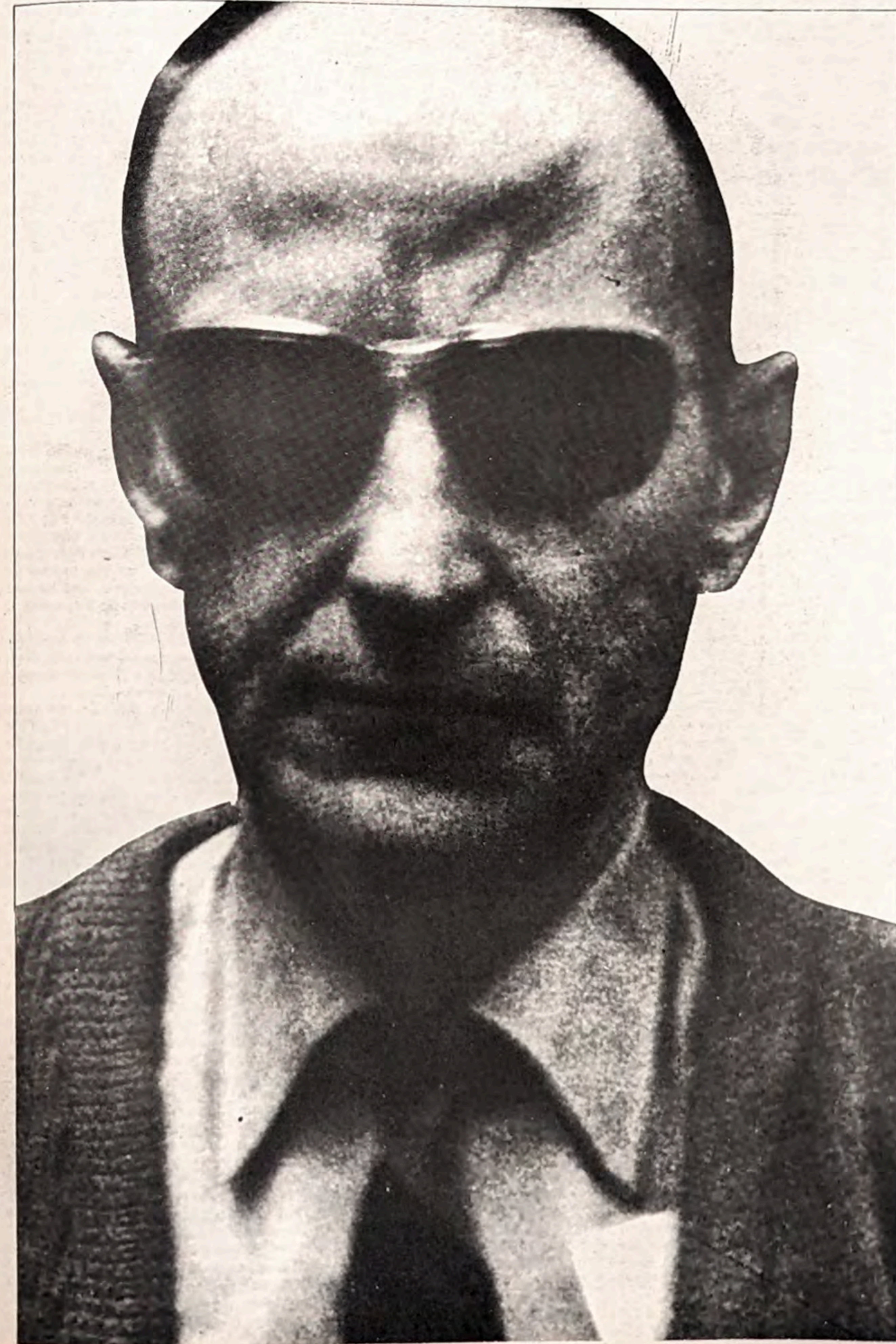
As I discussed a possible book with McCauley, it occurred to me Cooper might be induced to turn in the money, by giving him a share, say 20 per cent, of the book proceeds, or arranging with a publisher a plan by which royalties would be put into a legal defense fund.

The return of the \$200,000 in \$20s, would, naturally, be proof that we had the right man.

I had stored the tapes and other documents in a friend's safety deposit box and was reading stories in the press that posited 500 military hands were searching the woods around Lake Merwin for Cooper's body. In New York, McCauley made a quiet inquiry about a book with a friend at Harpers Magazine Press. Any negotiations he could make would have to be extremely discreet because of a chance the story would get out. Harper & Row was eager to do it, especially after McCauley told them any contract would be contingent on Cooper returning the money before they would be asked to put up advance money. McCauley was excited about the prospect of a book. Harper & Row, which would publish a hardback edition, and a paperback publisher which would put out a paperback, made a tentative offer of an advance exceeding \$200,000. McCauley thought a movie deal might yield \$1 million. Experience had taught me to be amusedly sceptical of such giddy dreams of instant riches.

A Possible Book

Still, a book began to look like a reality. McCauley called to say he was arriv-



Our D. B. Cooper

D.B. COOPER:

ing with four Harpers executives. It was a touchy book. Still, they were coming, with contracts, the conditions being that Cooper would have to be induced to turn in the \$200,000 before they paid out any money—except for \$5,000 they would put up as security against their leaking the story to someone else.

The Harpers executives were escorted in one of those pleasantly airy cottages at the Beverly Hills Hotel, having coffee when I arrived. After awhile in California, the memory dims of what a hard core Eastern Establishmentarian looks like: tweeds, and pin stripes, ties, paunches, and gray, pasty faces. Among them was Brooks Thomas, the firm's chief legal counsel, a careful gentleman who later would distinguish himself by turning over a book which Harper & Row commissioned on the CIA involvement in Southeast Asian drug traffic to the selfsame CIA for pre-publication approval.

Not knowing Thomas at that time, I assumed his role would be to keep Harpers' position in the affaire Cooper delicately committed—but ignorant and thus not legally culpable. But no. After some dallying around, Thomas said, without blinking an eye, that there were new terms: before Harpers would commit itself, Cooper would not only have to turn in the money, he would have to surrender, and would have to be convicted or plead guilty. That I told them, obviously was impossible. I concluded that Harpers had become increasingly nervous about the whole affair, and was trying to get off the hook by establishing impossible conditions. Finally, in fact, Thomas said they were not interested under any conditions.

Aside from the obvious, this presented another problem: McCauley had approached the Harpers people confidentially; Harpers said it was interested; McCauley delivered a manuscript; Harpers read it and made an offer, but now was saying it wasn't interested. At least four, and possibly more, Harpers executives now knew the whole story. I asked Thomas for a collective promise of absolute secrecy. He said he didn't know if that was possible. He was uncertain, he said whether he had a duty as a citizen to call the FBI. It was not one of the better days.

McCauley later wrote me that Thomas is "the kind of person we all remember in grade school—the type who trudges into the cloakroom, hangs up his mackinaw, and then all the other kids rush in and stuff snowballs into his mackinaw hood and pockets."

One of the nagging problems about the story was the difficulty and near-impossibility of verifying any of Cooper's statements. To go to anyone, the airline, to Boeing, and certainly to the FBI to verify the story would not be intelligent. That would be blowing my story, and causing Cooper's arrest even before anything could be published.

If there was now a chance Thomas or someone else there might talk as seemed likely, then I would have to do something, quick. I telephoned Morgan in Atlanta, and he rapidly devised a plan:

He left instantly for Washington, went to the Justice Department, and reported that he had a client, unnamed, who had knowledge of a serious federal crime, that the client planned to publish a story about it, and that the client would turn over the information he would print — 10 days before publication—providing the client could get a promise of immunity. Here was the legal danger: were I to publish the story and Cooper take flight, then I might be liable for aiding and abetting a criminal to take flight to avoid prosecution, and other things. But if the FBI got the information 10 days ahead of publication, they'd have a fair shot at doing their jobs, and for that matter, possibly establishing whether Cooper's story was true. The promise of immunity was made.

Meantime, Morgan urged me to hurry

to New York and get the story into print. Newsweek was naturally excited about the story. An elaborate cover article was planned, but a mood of caution prevailed. My old colleagues in the top editorial positions — "The Flying Wallendas," they were called by subaltern writers—trusted me. We had gone through a lot of important stories together. They had printed a story on no evidence but my say-so before, but this was a bigger thing. One had to weigh the risks. The possible benefit of such a story was great. If it were a phony, it could wreck the magazine, one editor said. If only some of the facts could be checked.

The FBI began checking some of them upon receipt of the material Morgan had turned over. Sitting in New York, I expected word of Cooper's arrest to come at any minute. The week passed, and nothing happened. The tension was incredible.

Then word came through a pipeline at the Justice Department that the FBI thought the bills which Cooper had shown me and given me photostats of were not for real. How that deduction was made from examining the photostats, without seeing the real bills, I did not and have not learned. But the FBI said "Cooper" had superimposed

fake numbers over the actual serial numbers on the three \$20 bills—making them appear to be part of the skyjack loot.

That was enough warning to hold up publication of the story. Within weeks, on June 3, the FBI arrested William John (Jack) Lewis, 32, alias Seth Thomas, and Donald Sylvester Murphy, 49, who said he was Cooper, and charged them with four counts of federal fraud. Lewis later complained that the FBI dug up his lawn looking for money and other evidence, but didn't find anything.

Murphy, it developed, was divorced, the father of three children, and lived not in a suburban home but at the modest Higgs House Hotel at 540 4th St. in Bremerton, Wash., a shipbuilding town of about 35,000, near Seattle. He was said to do business as a realty investment promoter out of the Renard Development Company at 6608 Kitsap Way.

Practically next door, Lewis, married, father of three, assistant city manager of Bremerton for a time (until he couldn't pass the civil service exam) was operating as a land investment broker and as a representative of World Wide Engineering and Product Development.

When they were arrested, I naturally

Nicholas von Hoffman

Is It Fat City or Rat City?

Washington

THEY PUT A PICTURE IN THE papers the other day of a fine, sleek-coated, long-tailed rat taking in the sun near two old ladies in a park a few blocks from the White House. The sound of scratchings and scurrillings are audible in this capital of the world. Claws and fingernails on cement. The news media mice on tilting sheets of glassy no comments...and Washington's rats.

In the first days of the Nixon Administration the rats were like those of any other city, visible only by night, and then just in the alleys. About the time of the Cambodian invasion they grew more populous and emboldened enough to appear by day scuttling under cars and running across the streets. Now at the end of the term, with John Connally heading up the Democrats for Republicans Committee, they're in parks, not running but standing still contesting with the pigeons for dry bread crumbs.

In this city of predators the rats have no natural enemies. Yes, there's a rat abatement program, but like so much under the Nixon Administration it doesn't work. People don't realize that. They think these Republicans are efficient because they don't make big, dreamy, Democratic promises and then fail to carry them out.

You can break modest promises too, but that hasn't sunk in any more than the Watergate Scandal or the Milk Scandal or the Wheat Scandal or the You-Fill-in-the-Blank Scandal. Nor does the country over which this capital presides know about another scandal: the almost nightly escape from Washington's jails. Since January they have averaged one escape every four days. They make good their get-aways not only singularly, but in groups.

Fat City, Rat City, who's to blame? One test of an administration is how it runs Washington. Do we blame the low caliber of Nixon's appointees or are the crooks bribing their way out? That accusation has been made but not answered. No questions get answered in the rat kingdom where the rodents come out of their holes, and a faceless President slips down and out of sight broadcasting modest radio messages in the Television Age from impenetrable places.

Many, many questions. There are questions to be asked about John Ales-

sio, a large Nixon campaign contributor, and a business associate of C. Arnholt Smith, a San Diego buddy-buddy of the President.

Last year John and Angelo, his brother, pleaded guilty to income tax evasion and were sentenced to the Federal slam at Lompoc, Calif. Unlike the crooks in Rat City they didn't need to escape because the "New Republic" (October 21st) reports, "...the Alessios had things much their own way at Lompoc. Fine food, liquor and women were enjoyed by them behind bars...they made regular unauthorized trips from the institution, often staying overnight. Meanwhile, the prison officials who made all this possible were being entertained royally and treated favorably in business deals by members of the Alessio family not in prison..."

Do they have a rodent problem at Lompoc too? The media mice might like to ask that question also, but they're kept on a starvation diet by Ron Ziegler, the humanoid-keeper press secretary the President has set over them to feed them occasional pellets of information and grains of news. With presidential press conferences abolished for all practical purposes, the mice must live off Ziegler briefings, and they only have half enough of them because he has the cut the daily briefings from two to one.


With their rations reduced to the level of pernicious anemia last week, they squeaked at their keeper as he stood in front of the blue curtain in the White House briefing room; but Ziegler squelched the weakened things, telling them that, "We're not going to have this type of chaos in future briefings...and) as far as this briefing is concerned, I'm ending it, it's ended."

The questions pile up. Instead of answers there are diversions such as Marina Whitman, the most presentable member of the Council of Economic Advisors, who makes those monthly admissions that prices have gone up again. "Dahlings," the ZsaZsa Gabor of economics says in effect, "we have our good months and we have our bad months, and this was a bad one again, but not so bad if you know how to read the numbers like us experts. Sure, bread's up, rent's up, milk's up, but we've got GM to hold the line on Cadillac, and diamond prices are stable."

Fat city, Rat city, who's to blame?

Copyright, 1972, The Washington Post-King Features Syndicate

These Boots Were Made to Boogie-Woogie



Wet Willie II
Get Your Kicks on Capricorn Records & Tapes at the Whisky on November 1 thru 5. Manufactured by Warner Bros. Records Inc.

ELECTRIC KABUKI MIXED-MEDIA EXTRAVAGANZA
A Unique Stage Experience!

HANK HIGGINS' **OOH POO PAH DOO**
Every Monday & Tuesday 8:30 & 10:30 PM
7561 Sunset Blvd. Hollywood 876-9069


THE FILMS OF MIKLOS **JANCSO**
Director of "The Round Up" and "The Red And The White"
See LA Guide listing for details

THE FILM SOCIETY
Wednesday at 3, 7, 9:30 PM 937-5544
THE EGG AND THE EYE 5814 Wilshire Blvd.

Whisky a Go Go

Nov. 1 - 5 Merry Clayton & Wet Willie	Nov. 8 - 12 Tower of Power Coming: Sylvester & the Hot Band Bobby Womack
---	---

no age limit — dinners
8901 Sunset Boulevard
Los Angeles, California 90069 652-4202



Julian Levy Photography 396-4434

ANNOUNCING THE ARRIVAL OF THE NATION'S LARGEST RESEARCH ORGANIZATION

Extensive selection of ON-FILE high-quality research
Fastest custom research done to your specifications
Lowest prices in the nation
Special discount plan

1093 Broxton Avenue Suites 234-238
Los Angeles, Calif. 90024 Phone (213) 477-4377
Hours 10 AM to 6 PM Mon. - Fri.

WRITE ON INC.

