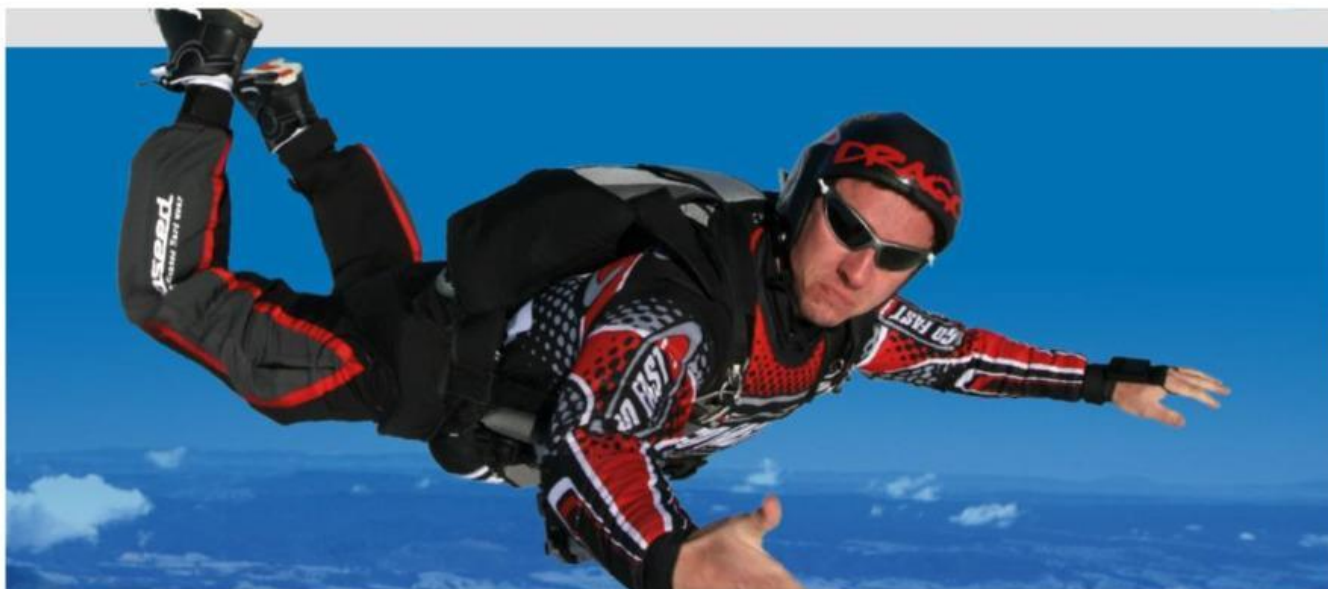




Michael Holmes is a skydiving instructor and a champion skydiver. He has done thousands of successful jumps in many parts of the world.

In December 2006, the twenty-five-year-old took off in a plane with sixteen other skydivers from an airfield near Lake Taupo in New Zealand. It was a beautiful, sunny day. At 4,000 metres above the lake, he jumped from the plane into the clear, blue sky. That day, he had a camera on his helmet to record his fall.

After 60 seconds, Michael pulled the cord to open his parachute (or canopy, as skydivers prefer to call it). But the canopy didn't open properly. Michael knew

immediately that something was wrong, because he didn't slow down. He just kept falling very fast. He wasn't worried. Skydivers always carry a reserve parachute in case the main canopy doesn't open properly. It had happened to him a few times before, so he knew what to do. First he had to get rid of the main parachute. If he didn't, the reserve would get caught in the strings of the main one.

So, he pulled the cord to unfasten the main canopy. Nothing happened. He pulled it again. Again nothing happened. The strings of the main parachute were caught in the bag on his back. All the time he was falling at nearly 200 kilometres per hour. He was spinning out of control, too, and he almost became unconscious. He had to think fast.

By now, he was only about 1,000 metres above the ground. In less than 30 seconds he would hit the ground travelling faster than a train. If that happened, he would certainly die. He took out his knife to cut the parachute strings, but he couldn't reach them. He tried again and again, but it was no use. The strings were too far away from him.

He looked down. He could see the airfield and the lake. They were rushing towards him at terrifying speed. 'If I landed in the lake, I'd probably survive,' he thought. But then he realized that the lake wouldn't save him. If he hit the water at that speed, it would knock him unconscious and he would drown before anybody could reach him. In any case, he couldn't

steer the half-open canopy. He had no idea where he would land.

Just 220 metres from the ground, he had no choice. 'If I try to open the reserve parachute now, perhaps it won't get caught in the strings,' he thought. It was his only chance, so he pulled the cord to open the reserve parachute. But he was unlucky. The reserve got caught in the strings and didn't open properly. It slowed him down a little, but he was still falling at 130 kilometres per hour.

He was now just five seconds from the ground. 'This is it. I'm going to die,' he thought. He waved to the camera on his helmet and shouted: 'Goodbye!'

Then BANG! And everything went black.

Put the events in the correct order.

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ a He couldn't reach the strings. | ☐ f He hit the ground. |
| ☐ b He slowed down a little. | ☐ g He opened the reserve parachute. |
| ☐ c He tried to unfasten the main canopy. | ☒ h He jumped from the plane. |
| ☐ d He tried to cut the strings of the parachute. | ☐ i The strings of the canopy were caught in his backpack. |
| ☐ e He pulled the cord to open his canopy. | ☐ j The canopy didn't open properly. |

b  **2.21** Listen to the end of the story. Choose the correct answers.

1 What saved him?



a soft mud



b the roof of the hangar



c thick bushes



d a hot-air balloon

2 What did he injure?

a his neck and hip

b his back and knee

c his ankle and lung

d his liver and shoulder

3 What did he do after the accident?

a He spent two years in hospital.

b He soon started skydiving again.

c He gave up skydiving.

d He designed a safer parachute.