

Did He Get Away With It?

Have you ever heard of Dan Cooper? He was the central figure in a crime that happened decades ago and still **hasn't been solved**. Late in November of 1971, on a short flight between Portland, Oregon, and Seattle, Washington, a flight attendant **was handed** a note by a mysterious middle-aged man dressed in a dark suit. Leaning close to her, he said, "Miss, you'd better look at that note. I have a bomb." He then opened his briefcase so that she could see several red cylinders and a lot of wires. The man, who used the alias "Dan Cooper," was demanding \$200,000 (worth about \$1,160,000 in 2015 dollars), four parachutes, and a plane to fly him to Mexico.

The plane proceeded to Seattle with none of the other passengers even aware it **was being hijacked**. The passengers got off the plane, and "Cooper" got what he was demanding: \$200,000, all in \$20 bills that **had been photocopied** by FBI agents so they **could easily be identified**. Then the plane **was refueled** and took off for Mexico with only Cooper and five crew members on board.

Once the flight was under way, Cooper ordered the flight attendant to go to the cockpit and stay there. As she was leaving, she noticed him trying to tie something around his waist—presumably the bag of money. Then he **opened the plane's rear stairway** and jumped out of the plane. The crew felt pressure bumps that **were probably caused by Cooper's jump**. The air temperature was seven degrees below zero. Cooper **was not equipped** with any survival gear and was wearing only light, casual shoes.

Cooper **has not been seen or heard from** since that night. Who was he? Did he get away with his plan? Or **was he killed** trying to commit the perfect crime?

Authorities speculate that Cooper landed near Ariel, a small town near the Columbia River north of Portland. Only one real clue **has been discovered**. In 1980, an eight-year-old boy inadvertently dug up \$5,880 of Cooper's money near a riverbank. It was only a few inches below the surface of the earth, but it had decayed so much that only the picture and the serial numbers on the bills were visible. Rotting¹ rubber bands **were found** along with the money, indicating that the cash **had to have been deposited** there before the bands fell apart. Since then, the area **has been searched** thoroughly, but no trace of Cooper **has been found**.

What really happened? Many investigators believe that Cooper **must have been killed** by the combination of the weather conditions and the impact of his fall, but if so, why **have none of his remains ever been discovered**? Is more information **known** than **has been revealed**? Is Cooper's body in some remote part of the wilderness area into which he jumped, or is he living a luxurious life under an alias somewhere? Did he **have** the \$5,880 **buried** by an accomplice to throw the authorities off the track? Or did he bury it himself? After all these years, one can legitimately ask why this case **hasn't been solved**.

Cooper has become a legend. His story **has been told** in books and articles and even in the movie *The Pursuit of D. B. Cooper*. In Ariel, the hijacking is still **celebrated** every year. Notwithstanding the FBI's claims that Cooper could not have survived the jump, some believe that he did. Local bar owner Dona Elliot says, "He did get away with it... so far." Others don't think so. Jerry Thomas, a retired soldier who has been working independently on the case, thinks that Cooper didn't survive the fall and his body **will eventually be found**. "I know there is something out here," he says. "There has to be."

Will this case ever **get solved**? Who knows? As of July 2016, none of the missing money **had been recovered**. Although the case **has been** officially **closed** by the FBI, interest in the case of Dan Cooper has not diminished, and it remains the only unsolved air piracy case in American aviation.



Police Sketch of Dan Cooper

1 rotting: decaying

AFTER YOU READ

A VOCABULARY Choose the word or phrase that is closest in meaning to the word in **bold**.

- The plane **proceeded** to Seattle with none of the passengers even aware it was being hijacked.
a. arrived in b. continued to c. stopped in d. avoided
- He was tying something around his waist, **presumably** the bag of money.
a. definitely b. definitely not c. most likely d. probably not
- Cooper was not **equipped** with any survival gear.
a. provided with b. thinking about c. impressed with d. interested in
- An eight-year-old boy **inadvertently** dug up \$5,880 of Cooper's money.
a. eagerly b. with help c. with great effort d. by accident
- Is more information known than has been **revealed**?
a. rejected b. made known c. manufactured d. suggested
- Notwithstanding** the claims that Cooper couldn't have survived, many believe he did.
a. In spite of b. Involving c. Because of d. Along with
- As of 2016, none of the missing money had been **recovered**.
a. destroyed b. known about c. seen d. gotten back
- Interest in the case of Dan Cooper has not **diminished**.
a. lessened b. increased c. continued d. been proved

B COMPREHENSION Read the statements. Check (✓) *True* or *False*. Correct the false statements.

- | | True | False |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. The flight Cooper hijacked originated in Seattle. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 2. Dan Cooper claimed to have a bomb. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 3. The money Cooper received was in bills of different denominations. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 4. The passengers were aware of what Cooper was doing. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 5. A portion of Cooper's money was discovered by authorities. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 6. Cooper was definitely killed when he fell from the plane. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 7. Cooper may have buried the money that the boy dug up. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 8. Almost everyone thinks Cooper got away with the crime. | ☐ | ☐ |