

Arming Pilots, political Shenanigans, etc.
August 20, 2002

As many of you by now know, I have been somewhat under the weather. I sailed through some serious surgery far better than I ever expected only to find some serious side effects.

They were serious enough to prompt a trip back to the hospital 15 days after discharge. I was there for five days before being allowed to leave and now, five days later, I am attempting to write this. I am still very debilitated, but figure this will be good therapy.

Since I have been out of focus for so long it has been doubly hard to know where to start. My mind has been focusing on individual thoughts rather than on main themes. These are some of what I call random thoughts.

I have been hearing a lot about the government's attempts to thwart terrorism. It's nearly a year later and they still have not addressed the weakest link to the whole system, whether or not to arm pilots. The Bush administration and his leftover Clinton appointee, Transportation Secretary Minetta, are still dancing around the issue.

In a pointed question to Minetta at a congressional hearing on the subject – Do you think any of the hijackings on 9/11 would have succeeded had the pilots been armed and secure cockpit doors been in place? – his answer was, it's still our policy not to arm pilots. He refused to directly answer the question. My question is, why is he still Transportation Secretary?

Ernest Hollings, famous flannel-mouth Senator from South Carolina, is holding hearings on the subject. One of those begging to testify is the wife of one of the pilots of one of the planes that hit the Trade Center towers. Her husband, like many pilots, was an ex-military man, well skilled and qualified in the use of firearms. Hollings refuses to allow her to testify.

A dissenting reader recently took issue with my expressing concern over the actions of those Representatives other than those belonging to my home state or that I do not vote for. I sure will, as long as their actions affect the security and safety of this nation. The rest of the nation should feel the same way about our preeminent recently anointed Senator, late of Arkansas.

Here is the other thing winding me up – the so-called corporation failures and their cooked books! What's with cooked books? How can that happen? Where is the IRS? Isn't it against the law already to misstate your earnings? Is it not illegal and downright fraud to dupe and mislead people to invest in property that is fraudulently represented? Why after all these years isn't it?

Have you ever heard the old adage, if it's too good to be true, it probably isn't? I feel terribly sorry for the poor hard-working people in this country who have lost everything to what amounts to white collar crooks.

The hypocrisy of our duly elected officials, who were elected to protect us from such fraud, makes the tragedy all the more appalling. Why should I say that? Not because many of them made huge fortunes from the transactions themselves or got huge campaign contributions for looking the other way while it went on, but simply because our state and federal governments are operating on cooked books as well!

King Mario did it with sleight of hand with the Canal Department and Thruway Authority.

The Feds do it with Social Security and God knows how many other agencies. Some departments, such as Defense, are impossible to audit.

I am becoming damn cynical in my old age about what any politician of any bent has to say. They all believe we work for them and their every thought and utterance is directly aimed at getting reelected. After that we will worry about the people.

(Written on August 12, 2002)