

A PILOT OFFERS A GLIMPSE INTO HIS WORLD

Recently, a lot has been said and written in the press concerning pilots' salaries and compensation. We have been told about how much it will cost our company, our job has been compared to others, and various subtle and not so subtle threats and intimidation tactics have been hurled at our group. In light of the current situation, please permit me, a pilot, to give you a small glimpse into my world.

DON'T COMPARE MY JOB TO OTHER JOBS:

- How many boardrooms explode over Long Island Sound?
- How many meetings conclude with hundreds of dead bodies?
- How many trucks cost \$82 million dollars?
- How many doctors spend half the month away from their families?
- Do the children of media representatives cry when Daddy puts on his uniform to go to work because they know he will be gone for a week?
- How many salesmen lose their jobs because they have high blood pressure?
- How many lawyers spend Christmas alone in a crash pad?
- When your spouse is watching TV and the program is interrupted by a news flash of an aircraft accident, does he/she momentarily freeze in fear for what they might hear?

There is not another profession in the world where the consequences for mistakes are so catastrophic and unforgiving.

THE PRICE:

- I pay the price when somebody loads full oxygen containers in the cargo hold.
- I pay the price when a terrorist has a bone to pick.
- I pay the price when loaders forget to set the locks.
- I pay the price when the engineers design a fuel pump not quite correctly.

YOU SPEAK OF THE COST:

- Ask the CEO of AirTran the cost of a DC-9 buried in the Everglades.
- Ask Fred Smith the cost to scrape a DC-10 and MD-11 off the runways at

Steward and Newark.

- Ask Fine Air the cost to clean up a DC-8 off a Miami street.
- Ask Korean Airlines the cost of a 747 that didn't quite make the runway at Guam.
- Ask Bob Crandall the cost of a B-757 impacting a Colombian mountain.
- And if not for their cool, calm professionalism, what could have been the cost of a UPS B-727 that suddenly went dark and silent four miles above Chicago? How much were they worth that night? Industry standard or 28% below?

WHEN YOU TRY TO INTIMIDATE ME, REMEMBER:

- It was I who flew Cobra gunships in the jungles of Vietnam while you worked on your master's degree.
- It is I who sits alone at the tip of an F-18 in the silent instant before I am catapulted over a cold, dark sea, while you sleep peacefully in your bed.
- It was I who one night watched my wings grow heavy with ice, miles from the safety of the nearest airport, praying that I had enough fuel to find clear skies, while you watched Monday Night Football.
- It was I who flew a C-130 into Panamanian gunfire, while you decorated your Christmas tree in 1989.
- It was I who faced head-on the fourth largest army in the world over the deserts of Iraq and brought it to its knees, while you watched it on CNN.
- It was I who landed an A-6 on a floating piece of tarmac no bigger than your backyard, while you mowed yours.
- It was I who orbited in unarmed tankers over enemy territory to replenish others sworn to protect you.
- It was I who watched missiles and bullets blossom in my face, yet didn't turn and run, while you watched flowers blossom in your garden.
- It was I who buried a friend.
- It is I who knows a little boy who will never play catch with his dad, so that you may play with your grandchild.

Sir, please don't try to intimidate ME. I am not your enemy; I am your asset - an asset that has experienced and accomplished things few dare to try. Realize this and there are few obstacles we can't overcome.

-Author Unknown (presumed to be a UPS pilot)