

# A Pilot for Hijackers

Billy Neal Williams

By ROBERT LINDSEY

Billy Neal Williams, who grew up on the Oklahoma plains and wanted to be a pilot as long as he could remember, crouched behind a seat in the Boeing 727 Thursday and, with his left thumb, cocked the hammer of a revolver thrown to him from the ground seconds earlier.

A few feet away stood Arthur G. Barkley, who had hijacked the Trans World Airlines jet over New Mexico, and was now ordering the crew to take off again from Dulles International Airport. "I convinced myself I had to shoot this man. It was the hardest decision I'd ever made in my life," Captain Williams recalled yesterday. "My intention was to fire as rapidly as I could."

Twice, passengers got in the pilot's line of sight, and before he could shoot, Barkley was injured and subdued by two other T.W.A. pilots and by Federal Bureau of Investigation agents in the cockpit.

It was only then, Mr. Williams said, that "my hand started to shake a little."

"I lost my cool in those last few minutes," he said.

## Twice Volunteered

Even this slight public display of emotion probably surprised most friends of Captain Williams, who had twice volunteered to walk into a jetliner that had been commandeered by an armed hijacker. Last Oct. 31, he volunteered to take command of a Boeing 707 at Kennedy International Airport that had been hijacked over California by Marine Lance Cpl. Raphael Minichielli, and then flew the plane to Rome.

"He's just not an excitable guy," one of his friends, Captain Richard Hastings, who flew co-pilot on last fall's Roman odyssey, observed yesterday.

"During the whole trip to Rome he didn't show any emotion. He stays cool. He's a professional, a pilot's pilot who knows his job. I've never heard a pilot say a bad thing about him."

## Diverted by War

Captain Williams was born Oct. 8, 1923, at Drumright, Okla., the son of an oil worker. He took his first airplane ride with an itinerant barnstormer when he was 11 years old, and by the time he was 18, he had his own pilot's license.

He entered Oklahoma State University in 1941 to study engineering. But World War II diverted him to the Army Air Forces, and after spending the duration as an instructor pilot, he joined T.W.A. in 1945.

Since then, he has flown



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everything T.W.A. has put in the air—from DC-3's to the Boeing 747 jumbo jet. Now chief pilot of T.W.A.'s international division, he has 19,000 hours of flight time in his log.

In 1947, on a flight between Los Angeles and San Francisco, he met an attractive stewardess, and they were married five months later. Captain Williams and his wife, Delores, have two sons, David, 21, an Army specialist 4 serving in Vietnam, and Richard, 19, a student at the University of Colorado.

The family lives in a two-

story contemporary style home on a waterfront lot in Amityville, L. I., and Captain Williams spends a large part of his leisure time piloting a 25-foot cabin cruiser that he berths near his back door. Mrs. Williams says of him: He's a considerate husband, a good father, and a good pilot."

## Much More Frightened

Captain Williams said yesterday that he was much more frightened during his experience Thursday than he was last November.

"This man was more cold, more deliberate, and he meant to get rid of us all. He sent cold chills down my spine. At one point when we were in the air I asked him if I could take off my coat, and he said, 'Sure, you might as well be comfortable when we go down.'"

He didn't have a smile on his face. He meant it. He said the plane and the people were the price the Government would have to pay for cheating him out of some money. He said: "We're just going up high in the sky, and that will be it." He said he was going to pour gasoline on the money [\$100,750 in cash placed aboard the plane] and burn it up. He said he wanted to destroy the money."

Captain Williams a stocky man with grey eyes and dark hair, weighs 150 pounds and stands 5 feet, 7 inches tall. He said his greatest pride as a pilot came from giving passengers a good flight.

"The greatest satisfaction you can get is to be able to get a flight to its destination and do it with finesse — a smooth ride, with everything working out right, and the passengers getting the best possible trip," he said.

But, he observed yesterday: "This guy was one passenger I didn't enjoy having."