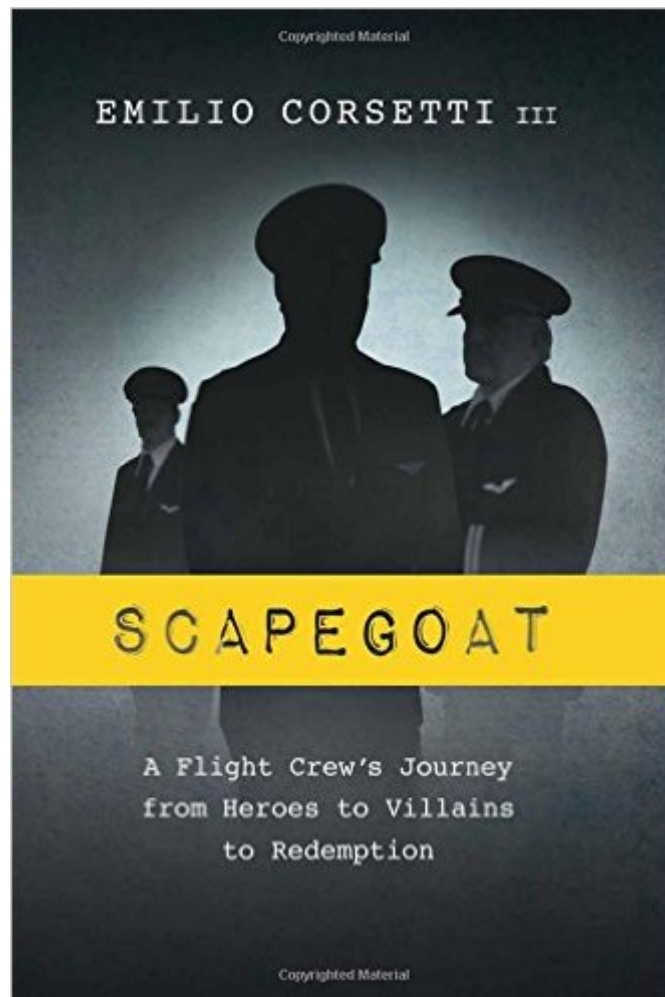


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Scapegoat: A Flight Crew's Journey From Heroes To Villains To Redemption



Synopsis

"This is the kind of case the Board has never had to deal with—a head-on collision between the credibility of a flight crew versus the airworthiness of the aircraft." NTSB Investigator-in-Charge Leslie Dean Kampschor

On April 4, 1979, a Boeing 727 with 82 passengers and a crew of 7 rolled over and plummeted from an altitude of 39,000 feet to within seconds of crashing were it not for the crew's actions to save the plane. The cause of the unexplained dive was the subject of one of the longest NTSB investigations at that time. While the crew's efforts to save TWA 841 were initially hailed as heroic, that all changed when safety inspectors found twenty-one minutes of the thirty-minute cockpit voice recorder tape blank. The captain of the flight, Harvey "Hoot" Gibson, subsequently came under suspicion for deliberately erasing the tape in an effort to hide incriminating evidence. The voice recorder was never evaluated for any deficiencies. From that moment on, the investigation was focused on the crew to the exclusion of all other evidence. It was an investigation based on rumors, innuendos, and speculation. Eventually the NTSB, despite sworn testimony to the contrary, blamed the crew for the incident by having improperly manipulated the controls, leading to the dive. This is the story of an NTSB investigation gone awry and one pilot's decades-long battle to clear his name.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I just flew from Minneapolis to Atlanta to Dublin and hearing an airline story immediately piqued my interest. I think it's important to NOT Google what happened to fully enjoy the book as the author

is considerate enough to give detailed stories within the major body. Like a good action movie, something big happens by the 18-minute mark. At first, the writing is crisp and tight, the author writes enough so the reader can get invested, but not too much time to get lost in minutia. While the setting is an airplane, what the book really provides is a "you decide" book that is detailed enough for someone to take notes if they so chose. You will hear the story of the incident in carefully outlined detail, then many different points of view, but ultimately that of the defense of the pilot Captain "Hoot" Gibson. What makes the story compelling is that in 1979, there was no Google or the social media platforms and videos that might have added evidence one way or the other. The book mentions this connection, but think about research through real newspapers, microfilm, and finding people. As a member of Generation X living in the Washington DC suburbs, my first plane tragedy memory came from Air Florida Flight 90, a plane that hit the 14th Street Bridge in bad weather. This flight, however, was not an icy mess from takeoff, rather, an opportunity for a pilot and crew to be at their finest. As we look to a future with self-driving cars, one wonders if a computer could have done what this pilot did. Dialogue is an important part of most audiobooks. For this book to succeed, we need different voices. There are some tower-to-airport, airport-to-tower dialogues that give it a cinematic feel, but overall it is a straightforward narrative.

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