

PAN Amusings

As a "New Hire" pilot/navigator for Pan Am in 1965 I was on top of the world. There were a few problems, I had no money, extremely low pay and a wife and two children. But for my participation in the Air Force Reserve on weekends and days off I would have certainly been at the bottom of the pilots economic scale, but I was working for the "World's Most Experienced Airline". (It was rumored that this title came from having the most experiences, many of them bad).

After operating several flights as a navigator across the North Atlantic, I was fortunate enough to get assigned to a flight to South America. I found the navigation burden much less on this route, in fact most Pan Am captains could use the radar to get a drift angle by painting the terrain and interpreting the Doppler shift of the beam on the screen. This was combined with a few erratic ADF facilities that may or may not be working and their personal knowledge of the route to successfully navigate without the help of their navigator.

On this particular flight my Captain was Dick B., who was somewhat arrogant and aloof, and at this point in my new career the only captain, in fact the only man that I had ever seen wearing clear nail polish.

My layover had been in the "Paris of South America", Buenos Aires, a great place for food and fun and extremely inexpensive.

After completing our operations briefing I gathered up enough paperwork to overgross a Cessna 150 and followed the captain out to the Boeing 707 waiting to go to New York. As we climbed up the boarding stairs an obviously inebriated Australian met us at the entrance to the aircraft. He said to Captain B., "So your the ***** Captain are you, you're going to take us to New York." With no hesitation Captain B. stared at the passenger and said "**No sir, I am taking this aircraft to New York, you are not going!**" The passenger got to spend another day in beautiful Buenos Aires.

Ed Spellacy

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