

CATCH ME IF YOU CAN: BECOMING A PILOT

STEP	SKILLS REQUIRED
<p>What if I were a pilot? Not an actual pilot, of course. I had no heart for the gruelling years of study, training, flight schooling, work, and other mundane toils... But what if I had the uniform and the trappings of an airline pilot?</p>	
<p>When I was leaving the Pan Am building, I stopped and pretended to look at some of the notices, FAA (Federal Aviation Administration - regulates air travel in the U.S.A.) or Pan Am notices mostly, and was afforded a close-up view of one pilot's ID card. It was slightly larger than a driver's license and similar to the one in my pocket, save for a passport-sized colour photograph of the man in the upper right-hand corner and Pan American's firm name and logo across the top in the company's colours.</p>	
<p>I was going to need more than a uniform if I was to be successful in my role of Pan Am pilot. I would need an ID card and a great deal more knowledge of Pan Am's operations than I possessed at the moment. I put the uniform away in my closet and started haunting the public library and canvassing bookstores, studying all the material available on pilots, flying and airlines.</p>	
<p>A lot of the things I felt I ought to know, however, were not in the books or magazines I read. So I got back on the pipe with Pan Am. "I'd like to speak to a pilot, please," I told the switchboard operator. "I'm a reporter for my high school newspaper, and I'd like to do a story on pilots' lives - you know, where they fly, how they're trained and that sort of stuff. Do you think a pilot would talk to me?"</p> <p>There was a captain who was happy to oblige.</p>	

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I already had the wings. What I needed was an ID card and an FAA pilot's license. I wasn't too concerned about the ID card. The pilot's license had me stumped. The FAA was not exactly a mail-order house.

I looked in the Yellow Pages (business directory) under identification, picked a firm on Madison Avenue (any ID company with a Madison Avenue address had to have class, I thought) and went to the firm dressed in a business suit.

"My name is Frank Williams, and I represent Carib Air of Puerto Rico," I said crisply. "As you probably know, we are expanding service to the continental United States, and we presently have two hundred people in our facilities at Kennedy. Right now we're using only a temporary ID card made of paper, and we want to go to a formal, pastic-enclsoed card with a colour photograph and the company logo."

"I'm sure we can do a good job for you, Mr/Williams."

The lovely ID card lacked Pan Am's distinctive logo and firm name. i was wondering how to reslve the problem when a display in the window of a hobby shop caught my eye. There was an array of model planes, among them a Pan Am jet, the firm's fames logo on its tail, and the company legend on the fuselage and wings.

The model came in several sizes. I bought the smallest, for \$2.49, in an unassembled state, and hurried back to my room. I threw the plane parts away. Following the instructions in the kit, I soaked the decal and lettering in water until they separated from the holding base. I laid the Pan Am logo on the upper left-hand corner of the ID card and carefully arranged the firm legend across the top of the card. The clear decals, when they dried, appeared to have been printed on the card.

it was perfect. An exact replica of a Pan Am identification card.

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Frank also needed to have an authentic pilot's license, so Frank researched in the library again and eventually came across a firm that made plaques for professionals. By mail-order, he soon received a plaque containing a replica license, which he then took to a print shop to have copied, reduced in size, and then laminated. It looked authentic too.

I put on my pilot's uniform, which I had had altered to a perfect fit, tilted my cap at a rakish angle and caught a bus to la Guardia Airport.

I was ready for flight duty. Provided someone else flew the plane.

What were the skills that Frank needed to pull this scheme off so far?

What other skills would he need to be successful as a fake pilot?

Do you think you could do this?

What role do you think his background has in the choices that he is making?