

A mother, father, and daughter got into their plane, heading for New York. Shortly after take-off, the father stroked. The mother came forward to help but then she stroked as well. The daughter, alone, had to land the plane so her parents could get help. This is a true story.

9132 Victor

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9132 VICTOR!

Three got into a plane,
Only I walked away

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Table of Contents

Dedication	vii
Additional Dedication	x
Additional Acknowledgement.....	x
Prologue.....	xi
FROM MY PERSPECTIVE	1
WHEN DANI MET BILL.....	5
Chapter One.....	7
Chapter Two	11
Chapter Three	18
Chapter Four.....	22
FAMILY AFFAIR	29
Chapter Five	31
Chapter Six	37
Chapter Seven.....	41

Jennifer Truman * 9132 victor!

CHAOS AT 3,000 FEET	51
Chapter Eight	53
Chapter Nine	59
Chapter Ten	64
Chapter Eleven	70
RACING AGAINST TIME	99
Chapter Twelve	101
Chapter Thirteen.....	105
Chapter Fourteen	122
Chapter Fifteen.....	126
Chapter Sixteen	134
Chapter Seventeen.....	140
Epilogue	147

PROLOGUE

THE CITIZEN NEWSPAPER

“EMERGENCY LANDING”

Local woman talked down by controller.

Aug 9, 2004, Gilford – A 30-year-old local woman with little piloting experience managed to land her parents’ small plane at Laconia Airport Monday afternoon after her father, the plane’s pilot, and her mother, a passenger, passed out shortly after takeoff.

With the help of an air traffic controller, Jennifer Truman, who is from the Gilford area, landed a single-engine Piper Malibu just after 4p.m. despite having only a basic knowledge of how to fly a plane, according to Gilford Fire and Rescue officers. “It was definitely all of her hard work that avoided a potentially serious situation,” said Gilford Fire Deputy Jim Hayes.

Authorities did not release the names of Truman’s parents, who rescue personnel said were unresponsive upon

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their arrival. However, the plane's tail number of N9132V indicates the aircraft is registered to Diana L. Truman.

Officials at Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center in Lebanon confirmed that they were treating both Dani and William Truman both of whom were involved in an aircraft incident earlier in the day. The couple is listed as living at 24 Pine Needle Land at Bald Peak Colony Club in Moultonboro.

Hayes was among several emergency personnel who responded to the airport prepared to handle a crash. Authorities say Boston Consolidated Terminal Radar Approach Control (TARCON) air traffic controllers contracted rescue crews upon receiving a report that the pilot of a plane had become incapacitated.

The mother aged 60, and father in his 60's and their daughter who was said to be between 20 and 30 years old, were the sole occupants of the six seater plane, officials said.

Gilford Fire Chief Mike Mooney said the plane took off from Laconia airport and was headed for Utica, N.Y. when trouble arose.

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They got up into the air and a few minutes out the daughter noticed her father nodding out,” said Mooney. The chief said the man eventually lost consciousness along with his wife, leaving the daughter the only one capable of landing the plane. While authorities would not disclose what caused their condition, they were said to be unresponsive when rescue crews arrived. The aircraft was reportedly full of fuel and five minutes away when the incident occurred.

Hayes said Gilford and Laconia fire departments responded to the runway with five fire rescue vehicles and two ambulances. Local fire department crews had already been at the airport earlier in the day as part of a program aimed at improving their capabilities of responding to such calls.

Rescue crews were waiting at the airport when the woman successfully set the plane down on the runway with the help of an unidentified air traffic controller. Those who witnessed the landing said Truman performed well in bringing in the craft without incident.

“She did a good job landing the plane...it bounced a few times, “said Mooney.

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Gena Adams, a pilot/instructor with Sky Bright Inc., has provided a few lessons to the younger Truman, but said the woman does not have a pilot's license. "The plane came in a little high and a little hot, but she landed it. The airplane is in one piece and they are all in one piece...that's all that counts," said Adams.

Adams said it would be easy for an inexperienced pilot to "nose" the plane directly into the runway upon landing. Airport Manager Diane Cooper said the plane did not appear to be damaged at all in the incident.

"She really put it down very nicely," said Cooper. Hayes said the incident only solidified the importance of his department having a good response plan in place for such incidents¹

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<sup>1</sup> Cunningham, Geoff, "Emergency Landing," *THE CITIZEN*, Page A1, A10, Tuesday, August 10, 2004

# **FROM MY PERSPECTIVE**



February, 2009

No matter how many times I read that article, the grief, despair, terror, and disbelief still come flooding back simultaneously from that day. August 9, 2004, three people got into an airplane headed to Utica, New York. Minutes later, only one walked away from it all, and that person was me. Since that tragic day, people have speculated what happened while we were airborne. I've waited until now to break my silence and tell the truth about that horrible day. Time moves forward and I must too. I'm hoping that this book will help me to do just that; move forward. Because, sometimes I feel that I have been motionless since my parents' deaths.

As you might imagine, it has taken me awhile to write this. My family and I share the value of keeping our privacy intact. We've never been one to make brash announcements of accomplishments nor did we have an interest in keeping up with the Jones's. We lived comfortably and enjoyed a quiet lifestyle with our friends and family.

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While all this was being played out on TV and in newspapers, I was at my parents sides each and every day. I didn't feel it was necessary to present myself to the media at that time. I also don't think I could have possibly have written a book at that time. My first responsibility was to my parents. Since then I have jotted down notes of the incident and memories of times with my parents. It's been 5 years but I miss my parents as much today as I did then. I say again and again, I am lucky that Mom and Dad were two of my best friends.

Each year when August 9th presents itself, I whisper a silent "*Happy Birthday, Dad*" to myself. It's the first thought I had when my alarm went off this morning in 2004. But, how do you say, "*Happy Birthday*" on such a terrible day? The sky was perfect blue, the temperature was just right but the day was sad. And, I have had a story to tell ever since.

A mother, father, and daughter got into their plane, heading for New York. Shortly after take-off, the father stroked. The mother came forward to help but then she stroked as well. The daughter, alone, had to land the plane so her parents could get help. This is a true story.

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