

# Survival

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## CHAPTER TWO

### Beginnings

When 1975 began, Harry Plum made a life change.

He was finishing college when the Central Intelligence Agency, came to his campus looking for new young talent. “Yes, we’d want you Harry but get a graduate degree in journalism, study geography we would like to see .... And get more language skills....”

Then a second interview. He signed on for America, and after completing his Master degree and some addition course work, he would then spent the next six months at Camp Peary in Williamsburg Virginia.

In 1979 he flew to Jakarta, and was driven to the U.S. Embassy by a Marine.. He was there to meet the Trade Representative. “Read and listen to every word spoken about President Suharto’s “New Order” government.”, he was told.

Harry started learning his new tradecraft a second time from the retiring field agent. What he learned in Virginia didn’t count for much. He flew every week to another of the island’s territories. He had studied Indonesia in graduate school, that’s what they wanted. Indonesia was three times the size of Texas, but composed of 16,000 islands, with plenty of humidity and heat. He soon understood the process of mining nickel ore and his mission was to make certain it was secured as it was exported to America. This was his first responsibility. American steel producers needed nickel to produce 316 stainless steel. America was in Indonesia to support this industry by protecting the security of the ore and making certain it was not diverted.

“Just become a set of watchful eyes in and around the ore mining, and the transit to shipping. You’re now an official US Trade Representative. While you are at it, there may be some extra assignments for you.” Embassy staff was protected by the Marine unit; but, after leaving the

compound, Harry learned to be self-sufficient. After two months he was able to drive and return safely, and then fly to the next ore mining site and return usually a week later. He remained focused on his assignments, protecting himself and other staff and avoiding local or international relationships of any sort.

During his fourth year on the job, on January 15th, the DC-3 where he was a passenger did not return to Jakarta. It crashed in South Sulawesi, three hours flying time to Jakarta's Soekarno-Hatta International Airport. Harry had passed out, his head was bleeding when he woke; but he was alive. Harry knew nothing about aircraft electronics, had no idea where he was. His Timex watch still appeared to work and he thought it read 2:17. He had taken off at 5:00 PM.

He climbed through the wreckage and tried to look for signs of life, there was none, twelve passengers and crew were all dead. His head seemed to have stopped bleeding; he struggled out the broken rear doorway. The wreckage was on level ground and not on fire but it was a mangled pile of scraps of metal; its cargo littered on a surrounding jungle floor. Harry listened for sounds: people, animals, anything; but, heard only silence with occasional birds rustling.

He sat and thought, "Where are we?" and "How the hell do I get out of here? Does anyone know where we went down? The pilot said nothing to us before the crash, there was no explosion just the whistle as we rapidly descended from about 8500 feet."

Using only the luminescent hands of his watch, Harry guessed twenty minutes pasted. His training at Camp Peary began to come back. Harry stood and returned and climbed back into the plane. When they had taken off there were twelve passengers and a crew of two, no flight attendants. He started by removing all the baggage from inside the passenger compartment. He left the dead behind but tried to cover them over when he found random clothing. Next, Harry went up front to the cockpit and looked in. They were both dead but Harry found maps and a compass that had come loose. Behind the pilot's seat he spotted a flashlight, hatchet and the flare gun with 4 cartridges. He took a jacket from behind one of the pilots and then placed what he gathered into a pile inside the jacket and carried it on his shoulder out the rear door.

It was 4:30 AM, when he had finished clearing out what he thought were essentials from the interior of the plane; Harry was exhausted. He collapsed by side of the plane, used the flashlight to scan the area around the plane hoping to figure out what was out there. Moments later he passed and woke when the sun began to come up. Harry believed that the pilots died trying to save everyone. The plane had come down about 100 yards short of a massive cliff. He assumed they saw what was ahead as they were losing altitude and forced a crash on the flat dry land to avoid the cliff. Unfortunately, darkness blinded the pilots from seeing the large boulders that penetrated the belly of the plane, snapped off one wing and buried the nose into a massive rock formation. But Harry Plum was alive.

During his search inside the plane, Harry had found four bottles of water and two small bottles of Gordon's Gin. He assumed a rescue team would be launched so he decided to remain near the crash site. Although Harry had minimal jungle training at Fort Peary, he would need to improvise. With morning sunlight steaming into the wreck, he made a final attempt to find anything useful for survival by searching each of the deceased; I job he was not happy about. Nothing else caught his attention. The storage area below the plane had been destroyed by the landing and there was little to search through. Harry found a hard hat and a pair of heavy leather boots with steel toe inserts that he might use, maybe the hard hat could become a scoop.

After a short rest, he completed searching through all that he had removed. He found two cigarette lighters, matches, and three small knives. The passengers had all been working for the mining companies in Indonesia not tourists. He reached up to his left shoulder for his holstered pistol. He felt it still there. "Thank God for that." Harry thought to himself, but he wondered when he would need it, it contained thirteen 380 ACP rounds. He hadn't removed it from his holster since he arrived in Jakarta.

He was alone, very alone.

Harry added hunger to his list of "to does". He cleared an area near the plane and used the hatchet to hack away at the ground cover and crafted a six-foot-long arrow to indicate to any search plane what direction he would walk when he was ready. He intended to return to the plane before night but hoped he might find fruit trees that might provide some energy to

sustain him. Later, he would use rocks if he could find some and make a bigger arrow. Before nightfall he gathered wood that he hoped would burn or at least provide smoke as a signal. He would start a fire by 3:00 PM. Between the fire and smoke he hoped that a rescue plane would notice his wreckage and send in help; his goal was to stay alive.

Harry found paper in his trousers and a pen in his pocket and began a schedule:

9:30 AM, leave plane and walk south using his new compass; walk two hours.

Every 15 minutes, tie some fabric scrapes to use as markers, to avoid getting lost or disoriented.

Take a shirt from the baggage and make a sack to hold and fruit or items of potential use

Find a long straight piece of bamboo, fashion a spear for protection against unknowns.

Harry had no knowledge of this environment except what he had studied in school. He now remembered that these jungles contained many predators that did not deal well with humans. In his short time in Indonesia, he was aware of the jungle wildlife: monkeys, bears, leopards, bats, orangutans, tigers, rhinos, elephants, gibbons, macaques, and deer. Harry tried to listen with every step he took. He was alone and his Browning BDA-380 pistol wouldn't go far; it was a last resort weapon. He had tied the largest of the knives to a six-foot-length of bamboo and secured it as best he could with shoelaces from another passenger boot. A pair that was too small for his size twelve feet.

He took one of the four bottles of water with him not knowing how long he would need it. He knew he needed to preserve it. After two hours of walking south via his compass, Harry was exhausted. He turned around and made his way back to the plane. The crash site lay in a barren area. But within one hundred yards in each direction was dense jungle. So far, south did not appear to Harry to be the way out, or so Harry thought. On his way back, Harry spotted a banana tree and cut off a stalk of six bananas and then found a tree with durian fruits which he carefully gathered to avoid their thorns. Inside was an edible tasty bit of protein, at least for tonight, Harry should be able to survive.

He spent the rest of the afternoon gathering material to burn for a signal fire and remove the bodies of the dead from the plane. He laid

them all near the site he intended for his fire and planned to sleep inside the wreckage. It should provide protection from insects and animals. The dead were dead, and the fire should keep larger animals away. There was nothing he could do for those who were dead. Although it could not be secured or watertight, tonight it would provide some protection from the elements if he was able to sleep. Before laying down on the center aisle of the plane, he ate four of the bananas and drank half of one bottle of water. He also started a signal fire burning what he could from the plane as well as some dead growth nearby. Keeping a signal fire going might be a challenge. for the moment he had at least started a fire with scrapes of wreckage. How long it would burn he could not tell. With that, Day One was ending for Harry Plum.

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*Thank you for reading this chapter!*

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