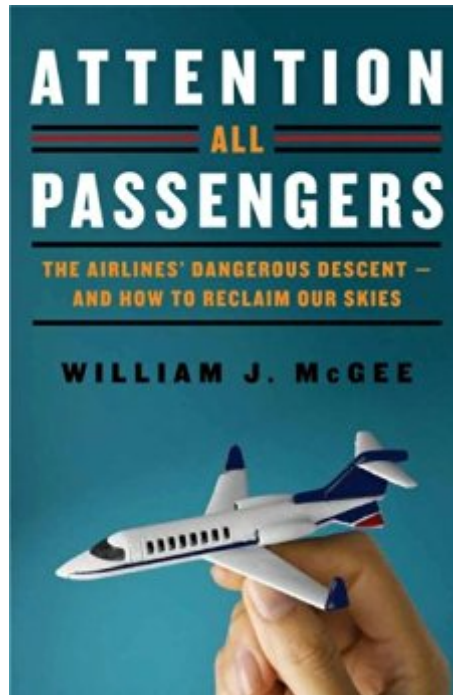


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Attention All Passengers: The Truth About The Airline Industry



Synopsis

A Fast Food Nation for the airline industry, *Attention All Passengers* is a shocking and important exposé revealing the real state of the "friendly skies" in which we fly. Award-winning Consumer Reports travel journalist William McGee, a former editor of the Consumer Reports Travel Letter, spent nearly seven years in airline flight operations management, and what he learned was less than uplifting. From TSA power grabs and an endemic lack of oversight to legislative battles and lobbying boondoggles to antiquated flight patterns and outsourced maintenance workers, the airlines and the Government are in cahoots, conspiring to turn a profit any way they can, no matter who has to pay the price. A provocative and hard-hitting call to action, *Attention All Passengers* will explode all our previous misconceptions about the airline industry.

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Customer Reviews

William J. McGee used to love to travel by air. Now he doesn't. I know how he feels. Like McGee, I've been fascinated with aviation since childhood and made it my career. For years, any time I could spend in an airport was fine by me. Now I avoid them. Once you're out of the airport and onto

the plane, it's no better. Full flights, suspicious flight crews, cranky passengers, fewer amenities, higher prices. McGee says it doesn't have to be this way. In *Attention All Passengers*, McGee explains how things work behind the scenes in aviation in a clear manner. He's obviously troubled by the way that a combination of deregulation and heightened security has turned the pleasure of air travel into an unpleasant slog. McGee doesn't dispute that air travel is now safer than it ever has been, but he also observes that the margins of safety built into every aspect of aviation have been eroded to a dangerous extent by financial need and greed. At the top of his danger list is the outsourcing of aircraft maintenance. The repairs, maintenance, and inspections that used to take place in the United States, are now happening in China and El Salvador and elsewhere, where the standards may or may not be equivalent to our own. Even where the training and licensing are up to standard, there's another menace - counterfeit parts. Parts can be expensive and where the inspections are lax or nonexistent, rebuilt or counterfeit parts can easily be substituted for new parts. McGee identifies deregulation as a mixed bag -- it brought ticket prices down but created more competition. That worked until the drop off of passengers after 9/11 and the astronomical expense of increased security measures.

The author, William J. McGee is a veteran airline professional and writer about the industry. If one is familiar with the industry as a professional or educated observer this book contains nothing new. If you think flying in the US these days is peachy keen, you won't like this book. There is no doubt about two things: First, like many of us professionals who worked in or around the industry prior to deregulation, he regards deregulation as having been disastrous for customer service and the health of the US "system of systems" of local service carriers and of "trunk carriers." Regulation ensured competition on most routes; prevented predatory fare wars; ensured safety standards; and made competition based on levels and types of customer service. He makes a good case that the US regulated airline system provided a public utility - serving the entire country - that served the needs of travelers who needed - for speed, urgency or business - to pay a premium fare above that of a bus, train (non-existent for a large part after 1971) or private automobile. Second, McGee casts light on serious safety issues including: outsourcing of over 50% of US airline traffic to "regional airlines" employing lesser trained and paid pilots and small uncomfortable aircraft; outsourcing reservations - with the passenger being discouraged from telephone contact to unknowledgable foreign call centers; outsourcing maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) to El Salvador and China beyond effective FAA supervision; and unsafe cost-cutting on the part of the airlines.

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