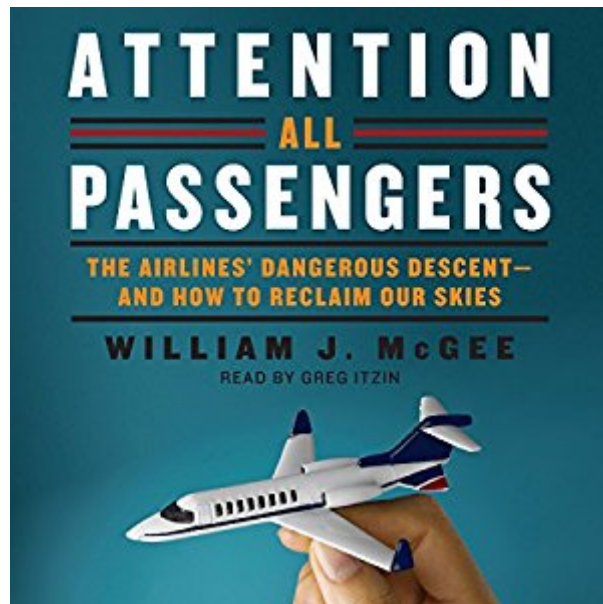


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# Attention All Passengers: The Airlines' Dangerous Descent - And How To Reclaim Our Skies



## Synopsis

Award-winning journalist and leading consumer advocate William J. McGee offers a shocking, essential exposé that reveals the real state of the "friendly skies". From outsourced call centers in India to the Alabama location where all lost baggage ends up, William J. McGee crisscrossed the country and traveled around the globe immersing himself deep into the world of commercial airlines. And what he found was shocking. McGee interviewed countless industry insiders - pilots, TSA security screeners, FAA inspectors, legislators, the CEOs of the major carriers, and even Ralph Nader and Steven Slater, the disgruntled flight attendant who famously jettisoned a JetBlue flight. Here he reveals how airline executives are cutting costs in "a mad race to the bottom" by delegating flights to second-tier regional airlines and outsourcing critical aircraft maintenance and repairs to unlicensed "mechanics" in China, Singapore, Mexico, and El Salvador. And while the U.S. airlines have raked in tens of billions of dollars for checked baggage alone in recent years, our skies (and our airports) are not getting any safer. What's more, McGee explains how both political parties and all branches of the U.S. government have conspired to place corporate interests above the interests of consumers, workers, the nation's economy, and even the planet itself. *Attention All Passengers* will change the way you view the airline industry and make you think twice the next time you see the fasten seat belts sign.

## Book Information

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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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