WINTER BOOT CAMP
WHAT THE WELL-HEELED MAN SHOULD BE WEARING

SPECIAL
SMART STUFF
THE SLICKEST TECH YOU'VE EVER SEEN!

MAN
JON HAMM
SALUTE TO A STYLE DON

REPORT
THE VANISHING
Mystery of Flight MH370 still haunts the world

GIRL
KENDALL JENNER
HAS NEVER LOOKED SEXIER

DRIVE
AMG C63 S
Sedan supercar

DO YOU NEED A NEW PENIS?
THE VANISHING

Words by Sean Flynn. Photographs by Jeffrey Milstein

Just over one year ago, Malaysia Airlines Flight 370 disappeared from the skies. No trace was found, not even wreckage. A disturbing silence from state officials and a clear trail of failure has turned a disaster into something much worse.

The red-eye to Beijing lifted off the tarmac six minutes late, at 12:41 in the morning, and made a climbing turn over Kuala Lumpur until it was pointed northeast, into the dark over the South China Sea. The aircraft, a twin-engine Boeing 777, was a marvel of engineering and avionics, one of the safest machines of any kind, ever, to transport people, and was flown by a pilot with more than 30 years of experience. The first officer was fully certified and had thousands of hours of flight time.

There were ten other crew members and 227 passengers on Malaysia Airlines Flight 370, which flew for the last time on 8 March, 2014. More than two-thirds were Chinese nationals, and another 38 were Malaysians. There was a Russian and two Canadians in business class, two Ukrainians in economy, and two Iranians travelling on stolen passports, from Italy and Austria, hoping to slip into Europe. There was an Italian in 34C and a New Zealander in 19C. A French mother, two of her children, and her son’s girlfriend were on board and two Australian couples were four days into an Asiatic tour.

There was a single American adult, in the first row of economy. His name was Philip Wood, and he managed sales to high-end clients for IBM. The company had transferred him from Beijing to Kuala Lumpur, and he was flying back to close out some accounts and help his partner, Sarah Bajc, pack up their apartment.

Twenty-four seconds after the plane took off, air-traffic controllers cleared it to climb to 18,000 feet on a line to IGARI, a spot in the sky at the edge of Malaysian airspace and one of thousands of navigational way-points airliners follow. Over the next eight minutes, MH370 was cleared for 25,000 feet, then 35,000, its cruising altitude. Just before 1:08, the plane’s ACARS (aircraft communications addressing and reporting system), which reports on flight and mechanical systems, bounced a routine message off a satellite to a ground station. There was nothing abnormal.

Controllers in Malaysia watched MH370’s label, a cluster of letters and numbers, stutter-step up their screens toward IGARI. The flight by then was out of primary radar range. At that distance, air-traffic relies on secondary radar, longer-range technology that gathers information — call signs, altitudes, headings, speed — from transponders in every aircraft. There are two of them on commercial airliners in case one fails.

At 1:19, just before MH370 reached IGARI, Malaysian controllers instructed the flight crew to connect their radio to Ho
Chi Minh control. The co-pilot answered, 'Good night, Malaysia three seven zero.' MH370 passed IGARI at 1:21. Twelve seconds later, its radar label disappeared.

Seventeen minutes passed before anyone was concerned enough to start trying to find the plane. Air-traffic control in Malaysia and Vietnam radioed. Silence. Other pilots on other airliners tried, too. Static. Someone in the Malaysian Airlines operation centre called the cockpit, twice, on the satellite phone. No answer. Every communication system had gone dead, even ACARS, which never sent its scheduled update at 1:37. Singapore air-traffic control hadn't picked up blips.

one else could explain what happened to that red-eye to Beijing. Nothing from it - a suitcase, an in-flight magazine, a life vest - had washed ashore, at least not that anyone had come across. So maybe Philip Wood, maybe all of them, were still alive. There was still a chance, and Sarah Baja was still willing to believe.

'Not unrealistically so,' she told me in a café on a bright Malaysian morning. 'The chances are very, very slim. A lot of zeros in that percentage. But there's no proof that it crashed, which means it might have landed. We don't know.' When nothing is certain, everything is possible.

--------------------

**Commercial airliners very rarely crash**, but when they do there is always debris. It doesn't matter if the plane explodes at 35,000 feet or nose-dives into deep water or slams into a desolate Antarctic mountain. From thousands of bits of flight data, they will figure out, to within a reasonable degree of certainty, why that particular plane fell out of the sky.

At first light on 8 March, helicopters and ships and slow, lumbering aircraft began scouring the waters beneath IGARI. They found nothing from MH370, not even a rainbow smear of jet fuel.

By the end of the second day, the searchers had still turned up nothing. The Malaysian government at that point could well have known that MH370 was almost certainly nowhere near those waters. They had access to two pieces of information, the most crucial of which they kept to themselves, sharing with neither the public nor the search teams.

The first, according to a well-placed source, was that the Malaysian authorities learned as early as the morning of 9 March that MH370 had likely continued flying long after its radar signal blinked off the controllers' screens. For almost seven hours, in fact, which means it was probably still in the air when search-and-rescue teams were swarming below IGARI. They knew that at 2:25 AM, little more than an hour after the flight's last contact, the plane's satellite-data unit powered up. It sent a log-on request to an ageing piece of hardware in space above the equator, which then relayed the signal to a ground station in Perth, both of which are owned by a British company called Inmarsat. This was MH370 effectively saying 'I'm still out here.' Every hour after that, the Perth station bounced a signal off the satellite to the plane, asking if MH370 was still online. In the jargon, those are called handshakes, and the plane answered five of them - still there, hour after hour. Then, at 8:19, the plane was never heard from again.

None of those handshakes, by themselves, indicated which direction MH370 had flown, how fast or how high or, least of all, where the flight ended. The system was designed to provide a communication link for phone calls and such, not location tracking, but it could be assumed a plane that remained airborne for seven hours was almost certainly far from where the search had begun.

Which leads to the second piece of information the authorities initially withheld: Malaysian military radar had tracked MH370 after it went dark. While civilians were frantically trying to contact a missing airliner, an unidentified dot blipped across military screens. After the plane went silent just past IGARI, it turned hard to the left and flew west, across the Malayan Peninsula, then northwest through the Strait of Malacca, pinging by radar almost the entire way yet completely ignored. 'The military should be on high alert, everyone knows that,' Julian Tan Kok Ping, a Malaysian lawmaker, told me. 'They should have scrambled fighter jets. If they allow an aircraft to fly in controlled airspace without a transmitter and no one does anything, that's criminal. Imagine if MH370 had turned back toward KLCC.' That's Kuala Lumpur City Centre, where stand the Petronas Towers, currently the tallest twin spires in the world. 'As MPs, we've raised this in the press many times, we've raised this in Parliament many times,' Tan says. 'And there's no answer.'

--------------------

**It's unclear exactly when the Malaysians** realised the military had tracked MH370. In May 2014, the Ministry of Transport said the information was retrieved from 'a playback of a recording from primary military radar,' which would suggest that no one was paying attention when that recording was made. The military radar was made public on the second day, and the search included the Strait of Malacca and the Andaman Sea.
But the Inmarsat data strongly suggested
MH370 wouldn’t be anywhere close to
there, either. On 15 March, a week after
the plane disappeared, Malaysian prime
minister Najib Razak announced that the
search was being moved to the southern
Indian Ocean based on what he called,
many times, new satellite data – the
Inmarsat data. One could argue, as Razak
did and not completely unreasonably, that
revealing that information would have
been cruelly premature; announcing it had
flown for hours without being able to say
where would at best offer unwarranted
hope and, at worst, horrific imaginings of
a terrifying seven-hour death cruise.

But one could also argue that revealing
the data would have established a
transparency, and thus credibility, as the
search continued. Yet the Malaysian
government – which is basically the same
government since independence in 1957 –
had never been a model of transparency,
and to become one in the glare of global
media would have been embarrassing.
A plane crash is a tragedy. Losing track of
a plane that kept flying for seven hours is
a tragedy compounded by farce.

The most common scenarios brought up
in the media, of course, involve terrorists.
One offers the possibility of MH370 being
commandeered as a flying bomb and shot
down by American flyers near a military
base on the island of Diego Garcia. That
was different from, yet only slightly more
sensible than, the other shoot-down
theory, promulgated early and quickly
forgotten, that the flight was accidentally
destroyed during a joint US-Thai live-fire
exercise. Since no debris has ever been
found, there is a more robust subset of
hijack theories: that MH370 landed
on Christmas Island in the Maldives,
Afghanistan, or Kazakhstan, to be either
weaponised for future use or held for some
other cryptic reason no one can fathom.

A year ago, everything seemed possible.
Perhaps it was a failed hijacking. Maybe
a grenade went off and blew a hole in the
fuselage and the plane depressurised and
everyone died of hypoxia and the plane
wandered off on autopilot for seven hours
until it ran out of fuel.

A hijacking seemed plausible because of
the way MH370 went dark all at once,
as if someone had pulled several circuit
breakers in rapid sequence. Those circuits
are in a bay beneath the cockpit that is
accessed either from the cargo hold or
through a hatch beneath the carpet next
to the business-class lavatory. That hatch
is not locked; there are YouTube videos
showing how to access a 777’s electronics
bay, and what’s inside.

Then what of the pilot,
Zaharie Shah? In the unaccountable
realm of theorising, Shah became either
a madman or a hero. In the damning theory,
he flew his plane into the ocean in
mass-murder suicide because his marriage
was falling apart or as an act of political
dissidence, albeit an ineffective one, as he
never bothered to tell anyone.

In the heroic version, MH370 was crippled
by a catastrophic failure, one severe
enough to sever communications but not
to bring down the plane – and the pilot did
his best before being overcome by fumes
or hypoxia. But that’s not quite right, either,
since the first thing a pilot would do is drop
to 10,000 feet, where the air is breathable,
and there is no credible evidence MH370
flew that low.

Then there are the dark ops. In Malaysia,
for example, two well-informed people told
there were four tons of mangosteens, an
exotic fruit, in the cargo hold. Perhaps
those weren’t mangosteens at all, but
rather, say, military technology that
someone, probably the Americans because
Americans do lots of nefarious things,
didn’t want to reach Beijing. So they
remotely took control and flew MH370 to
parts unknown, and killed everyone.

Possible? Well, yes. Those Malaysians weren’t
the only ones to mention Boeing’s uninterruptible autopilot, a
counterterrorism gadget that, according
to its 2006 patent, could be switched on
‘remotely via a communication link’. But
even if the plane had it, this seems like an
awful lot of effort and death for a problem
that could have been solved with a phone
call – stop that plane!

The French mother on MH370 was
Laurence Wattrilos. She was travelling
with two of her three children – daughter
Ambre and son Hadrien, 14 and 17,
respectively – and Hadrien’s girlfriend,
another French citizen named Yan Zhao.
They were returning from a week on a
Malaysian beach to Beijing, where they
lived because Laurence’s husband,
Ghyslain, worked there for years as an
executive at Lafarge, a cement and
building-materials firm.

I met Ghyslain Wattrilos on a grey
December morning near the Arc de
Triomphe. He was in the air when his
wife and two of their three children boarded
MH370. He’d left Paris the night before to
join them in Beijing for a week, and his
flight landed at about four o'clock in the afternoon. He switched on his phone when the plane was taxiing to find a text from a friend at Lafarge. 'I'm sorry, Ghyslain,' it read, 'for what has happened.'

French diplomats were waiting at the gate. Nothing more needs to be said of grief. Wattrellos did not invite me to breakfast to discuss his emotions, with the notable exception of announcing his dominant one at the outset. 'I'm not sad anymore,' he told me. 'I'm just... I don't know how to say it in English. In French, it's colère. Angry, but more than that...'

Furious?

'Yes. Furious.'

He is furious because he does not believe the Malaysian authorities - and possibly, the US, British, Australian, French, Thai, Indonesian and Singapore authorities - have been truthful. Which is reasonable, considering the Malaysians were not truthful in the aftermath of the plane's disappearance. 'They had something to hide from the very beginning, that's all I'm saying,' he said. 'It pisses me off when journalists say it's a mystery, the biggest mystery in aviation history. No, it's not. It's a cover-up. Maybe the reasons are good, but we need to know.'

A good reason, he said, would be if MH370 had been hijacked, which is what he initially thought. 'If it's a hijacking, you have no choice: you fly it somewhere and you shoot it down,' he said. 'That I could understand. If Malaysia or the US, or if they shot it down to avoid another 9/11, I think everyone would understand that.'

But when weeks passed without any wreckage being found, Wattrellos began to suspect the plane might have landed, though where or for what purpose he could not say. He is well versed in all the theories, but he did not favour one over the others.

'Everything is possible,' he told me. 'But they're lying to us.'

Wattrellos's disdain for the French government is personal, and it began with an official silence. 'When something happens to French people, they always say something,' he said. 'Always. For this flight, they never said a word. Nothing. To me, that is very strange.'

He wrote a letter to the French president, François Hollande, outlining his concerns, and got banal generalities from an aide in reply. 'My interpretation is they can't say they don't know anything,' Wattrellos said. 'He didn't want to lie to me.' In March, he asked a French judge to begin an inquest into MH370 as an act of terrorism; in late August, his application was denied for jurisdictional reasons he does not find convincing. 'That's why I strongly believe they - he meant the French and, by extension, several other governments - know what happened.'

Wattrellos, Sarah Bajc, and the families of two Indian passengers raised a few thousand dollars on crowdfunding site Indiegogo to pay a private investigator, but by December the money was running out and the PI wasn't having much success. Maybe it would have been easier if the relatives of the Chinese and the Malaysians were on board. 'One of the problems we have,' Wattrellos told me, 'is as an association, the families, we are not strong.'

CBS interviewed Bajc. She said the things people usually say in the startled hours of grief, the most important and unsurprising of which was that she did not accept that the man she loved was truly gone. 'I'm personally not willing to give up hope that there's a chance we'll find survivors, that we'll find the plane,' she said. 'There just has to be a chance.'

She did not believe then, and certainly did not believe in December, that MH370 simply fell out of the sky. 'By the ninth, I was sure it was something intentional,' she said. Partly that was instinct, but it was also logic. 'It all pointed to an abduction,' she said. 'And I think I knew at that point already that it had to be talked about. Otherwise it would be spun.'

Bajc believes the Malaysian government knows what happened to MH370. If the authorities weren't truthful from the start, there's no reason they're being so now. 'The country is covering it up,' she said. 'That should be considered criminal conduct, the cover-up. What they're covering up, we don't know. Never did I expect to go this long without knowing.'

I met captain Desmond Ross, a leading aviation-security expert, at his local pub in the Pyrmont-security neighborhood of Sydney. He understands that certain protocols...
should be followed when civilian airliners blink off radar screens. Ho Chi Minh control should have been in contact with Kuala Lumpur within three minutes of MH370 not showing up, preferably two, and most definitely not 17.

Ross presents a binary choice. 'Either incompetence, total dereliction of duty, which amounts to criminal negligence,' he said, 'or a conspiracy. What else is there?'

He ticks off the latter theories. 'There's no evidence the pilot or the co-pilot were suicidal. There's no point in hijacking it and not taking credit,' he said, 'unless they fucked up and they're keeping it under wraps because they want to try again.' At that point, nine months after the fact, no one had. And stealing it? 'If someone is really believing in this day and age that they can hide an aircraft and 239 people,' he said, 'they're kidding themselves.'

That leaves incompetence, dereliction of duty, and so forth. 'Malaysia's dug themselves a trench because they're trying to save face. If that's the case, they've dug themselves such a fucking trench they could bury all of Kuala Lumpur,' Ross says.

In Canberra, Martin Dolan hinted at pretty much the same thing. He is the chief commissioner of the Australian Transport Safety Bureau, the ATSB, which is in charge of the search. But he's limited in what he can say. What about, for instance, Indian radar? It should have picked up MH370. 'It detected nothing... Dolan started. 'Wait, I'm sorry. There was no detection. I have to choose my words carefully. I can't say more about Indonesia, but they are not concealing anything from us.' As for Australian radar, he chooses his words even more carefully. 'It, ah... wasn't aimed there at that time. And that's all I can say.' Dolan understands that those are the kind of words that breed conspiracies. He also understands bureaucracies. 'Speaking as a career public servant,' he said, 'if you have a choice between a conspiracy and a stuff-up, go with the stuff-up. It's a good rule of thumb.'

handshake, it would be at a point on or very near one of those long, thin curves.

But Inmarsat engineers by mid-March calculated MH370 had rounded the northern tip of Sumatra and then flown south, apparently until it ran out of fuel. Exactly where he was unknown, but they'd at least placed it along a narrow, if dauntingly long, slice of the Indian Ocean.

Inmarsat engineers are not the only ones to have reached that conclusion. Analysts working for five different governments, including the US, Great Britain and Australia, have, too, although they differ on precisely which point on the seventh arc is the most likely. Perhaps more important, a number of sceptical civilians with deep expertise in satellites, avionics, communications technology, and the like have scoured the data as well. A few dozen scientists, technicians, and others, including Jeff Wise of the Kazakhstan postulate, sorted themselves into something called the Independent Group. They were forced to rely on limited data, cobbled together from public documents and databases.

Between them, the members ran through endless flight scenarios of differing speed and altitude, and in September, Issued a report arguing MH370 most likely spiralled into the Indian Ocean 2 400 kilometres southwest of Perth. At the time, the ATSB had its priority search zone 970 kilometres north on the arc. On 8 October, after refining its own analysis, the ATSB moved south, to almost the exact same spot.

Since January, four ships have been steaming across 23 000 square kilometres of ocean, bouncing sonar waves off the bottom. 'We are very confident,' Martin Dolan told me, 'that the aircraft is where we've calculated it to be, we'll find it.'

The search is expected to be completed sometime this year. And if they don't find it? 'Then we'll go to the governments,' Dolan said, 'and say, 'We've got a problem. A very expensive problem.'

---

**Failed flight paths**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25 March, 2015</td>
<td>Germanwings Flight 9245</td>
<td>Suffering from depression/Co-pilot Andreas Lubitz allegedly locked the cockpit and crashed the plane into the French Alps, killing 150 people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 November, 2013</td>
<td>Mozambican Flight TM 470</td>
<td>The pilot who crashed the plane was said to be suffering from depression due to marital problems. Thirty-three passengers and crew were killed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 October, 1999</td>
<td>Egypt Air Flight 990</td>
<td>Co-pilot Amal Diab was reportedly driven hopeless and crashed the plane as an act of revenge. Two-hundred and seventeen passengers and crew were killed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 December, 1997</td>
<td>SilkAir Flight 185</td>
<td>Captain Tsui Wai Ming allegedly committed suicide by switching off both flight recorders and intentionally putting the plane into a dive. One-hundred and four people were killed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 August, 1994</td>
<td>Royal Air Maroc Flight 630</td>
<td>Pilot Younes Khatari was believed to have deliberately crashed the plane ten minutes after takeoff. Forty-four passengers and crew were killed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>