



TAKING FLIGHT AND I DON'T MEAN ABSCONDING

We've reached an altitude of 10,000 feet. Given the green light, I pull out my laptop, tuck the earplugs in and turn on the iPod and, just my luck, the first song that plays is *Cat's in the Cradle*, a traveling Dad's worst nightmare. Time away from my family, roughly 100 nights a year, is probably the only down side to my job, but it's a doozy. You get to a point where you memorize your kids faces just before they go to bed the night before travel. What do their voices sound like? Are they happy or are they fretting about something? Will they give mom a hard time while I'm gone? "Dad, will you be back in time to coach my soccer game or to attend the All School Sing?" Hopefully, the answer is yes.

While my job doesn't take me away to write bail, it takes me away to visit those agents who are writing the bail. The bail bond business is a different way of life. On the one hand you have flexible hours which might allow you to have lunch with your first or second grader on occasion or take in an afternoon at the ballpark. On the other side of the coin a bond call can take you away from a birthday party or holiday dinner and make you late for a special event.

Vacations, who can take vacations? Writing bail is 24/7/365. The cost for a vacation is double or triple what your neighbor might pay because not only are you paying for the cost of the trip, but there is also the loss of income from not being available to write new business. When you are able to take time off you have to be sure to have someone you trust watching the store, this being a cash business and all.

Jim Fitzgerald made an observation when I was out to see him and his wife, Sue, in Prescott, Arizona earlier this year. He's retiring after 30 years in bail but because of the time commitment he believes that 30 years is actually 40 in bail years. I'm certain most bail agents would agree.

There have been a number of good people in this industry who have recently retired or will soon. Jack Whitlock, of course, retired last year. Calvin Minard of San Diego retired earlier this year and Jim Fitzgerald is set to retire

before year's end. Marvin Byron, one of my favorites, retired several years ago but I still see him occasionally at industry functions. Marvin is notable for having posted the \$250,000 bond (on American Surety) for Al Cowlings, the driver of the white Bronco. I remember watching the judge order the bond exonerated on national TV. An exoneration on video, only someone in this industry can appreciate that novelty.

The industry is starting to segue into the next generation. I'm in my 24th year in bail and feel I have easily 20 years left in me. On the surety side I have my contemporaries in Brian Frank, Brad Williams, Pat Wood, Brian Nairin and Shannon Roche. Most of these gentlemen are second generation - building on what our fathers before us have accomplished.

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On the retail side, we have Jay and Travis Rothmeyer (IA), Leeann Curtis (CA), Terry Chapman (TX), Tom Loos (WA), Dana and Jamie Maslar (CT), Gilbert Jacobs (SC) and Lee Sexton (IN) just a sampling of all the good people writing bail today and for many years to come.

The bail bond business is an honorable profession and one that society simply does not recognize for what is accomplished day in and day out. Getting defendants to court when required so that victims of crime can see justice rendered is often taken for granted.

Bail is also a business of relationships. Bail agents get to know their clients while they are attending court. Clients rely heavily on their bail agent to make sure they have the right information on when to be in court and when they screw up, it's their bail agent that makes it right.

Oops! I'm getting the evil eye from the flight attendant. Apparently, I didn't hear the alert to "shut off all electronics in preparation for landing." I'll be on the ground in Houston, again, where I connect with my flight home to Indy.

No trinkets for the kids this trip, I refuse to place my kids in a situation where they think of my absences whenever they look at a shot glass collection from all fifty states.

Note to self - delete *Cat's in the Cradle* from my iPod.