

May 7, 2014

We're going to circle back to the Tommy Vietor interview with Bret Baier. The idea that appalling people like Vietor sat in the Situation Room the night of Benghazi stills draws comments. Jennifer Rubin;

Tommy Vietor, the former spokesman for President Obama's National Security Council — the entity on which the president depends to synthesize national security information and policy — went on Fox News to answer questions about Benghazi. Mind you, the entire episode — the failure to keep tabs on the influx of jihadis, the failure to protect Americans in Libya, the massive confusion and misinformation that persisted up through the president's Sept. 25, 2012, speech at the United Nations — was as much the responsibility of the NSC as any other entity. When asked about the e-mail Ben Rhodes sent out, Vietor snarked, "Dude, that was like two years ago." And that's when it became crystal clear how things like Benghazi happened in this administration.

Here are seven lessons we should keep in mind, ably illustrated by Vietor (who subsequently insulted Fox News rather than apologize, on MSNBC, declaring, "I guess you're only supposed to use the Queen's English on Fox."):

- 1. An error like Benghazi happens because multiple people have a hyper-partisan mindset that submerges everything to politics.*
- 2. The staff reflects the boss. If the staff is rude, immature and callous, the boss almost invariably is. ...*

Roger Simon has an open letter to William Goldman who wrote the screenplay for *All The President's Men*. Simon pitches a new project for a sequel - *All the President's Dudes*. Simon suggests the role for Vietor go to Justin Bieber.

*Hey, William Goldman. You're getting a little long in the tooth — we all are — but America needs your Oscar-winning brilliance for a new screenplay, a must-do sequel to your original called *All the President's Dudes*.*

You won't be able to use Hoffman and Redford this time. They're also, er, a little long in the tooth to play, say, Tommy Vietor. But there are a number of younger players out there. (I see Justin Bieber as Tommy.)

Look, I know you're a liberal and want to protect the fort. But don't you think things have gone a bit far with this Benghazi business?

I know. I know. It's not over yet. We need a Deep Throat or at least a John Dean to put an icing on the proverbial cake. Maybe we'll have one. But even if we don't, think of the dramatic possibilities.

Let's start with that ten p.m. phone call between Obama and Hillary ...

John Hinderaker wants to know where the prez and secstate were.

As I wrote [here](#), one of the striking features of the White House's latest email production is the complete absence of Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton from the communications on the evening of September 11, 2012. Their names appear only later, when staffers write heartfelt statements about the deaths of four Americans to be released over their names.

So where were they on the fateful night of September 11? Tommy Vietor—formerly Obama's van driver, now, apparently, a foreign policy spokesman—says that Obama wasn't in the situation room. Where was he? Resting up for his big fundraising trip to Las Vegas the next day? And how about Hillary? As Paul [wrote](#) earlier this evening, retired Air Force Brigadier General Robert Lovell testified today that the military should have tried to rescue the besieged Americans in Benghazi. Why didn't they? They were waiting, he testified, for a request from the State Department that never came. ...

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There's no way for even conscientious reporters to check all the hand-fed, self-serving details. So, they are passed on to the public as gospel of how our nation's leader addressed the issue, always with seriousness, deliberation and, in the end, calm decisiveness.

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What could President Barack Hussein Obama have possibly been doing that deadly night, what could his physical and mental condition have been that's so terrible and shocking that the know-everything chief executive would rather Americans think he was asleep at the national security switch?

That's something to awaken any American at 3 a.m. -- or earlier.

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Four people died in Benghazi. Even defenders of the Obama administration acknowledge errors of omission in the run-up to that day and on that day, and errors of commission in the days that followed. Yet Viator thought it appropriate to laugh off Bret's question. And the next night, on MSNBC, Viator didn't apologize: "Bret was asking me to remember what—if I changed a word on September 14th, 2012, and my frustration came through. I guess you're only supposed to use the Queen's English on Fox." Ho ho. But then Viator added, in a pathetic attempt to re-establish some modicum of gravitas, "But obviously what happened that day was an absolute tragedy."

Obviously.

And one obviously speaks about tragedies by saying, "Dude, that was like two years ago."

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So, a new phrase: "Veni, Vidi, Viator"—I came, I saw, and I made a fool of myself.

Peter Wehner says we're watching a presidency die.

... The mid-term elections are still six months away, but the political landscape for Democrats is perilous. And the odds are as good or better that things will get worse, not better, for Democrats between now and November.

The American public, at least at this point, seem intent on deliver a stinging rebuke to President Obama, his party, and liberalism itself. The left, knowing this, is going to become even more desperate, more ad hominem, and more deranged in their attacks.

It won't alter the outcome. We are watching the Obama presidency die. The cause of death? Massive incompetence. Flawed ideology. And the Obama agenda coming into contact with reality.

We are not the only people in the world watching the collapse of this presidency.

Richard Fernandez posts on how the world treats this administration with disrespect.

President Obama is still received throughout the Western alliance as the "leader of the free world", a position American presidents have held de facto since the end of the Second World War.

Despite the increasingly strident domestic criticism of the president and falling poll numbers, other leaders find it impolitic — not to mention diplomatically improper — to openly express doubts about Obama's character or competence.

So they've taken a page out of his playbook and decided to do a little backstabbing themselves.

The exact moment when the Benghazi crisis began to clip Obama's wings will probably be identified as August 29, 2013. That is the date the British parliament refused to join Barack Obama's impending strike on Syria after it had crossed his "Red Line".

Congress couldn't stop him. The American press couldn't delay him but the British parliament, by pulling out of the deal, tossed a wrench into the gears.

And now the Germans are doing the same thing. Though the Washington press try to portray Obama's inaction against Putin as the result of his generous nature, Obama is hampered by a more basic problem: Germany won't go along.

NBC news says that while "Obama wants the United States and Europe to stand together and force Russia to rethink its moves in Ukraine." But Angela Merkel isn't taking orders. ...

An American, watching this train wreck in Washington, is likely to call out, "Mayday." A blog named [Today I Found Out](#) posts on how we came to use mayday to denote extreme distress.

Today I found out why those aboard planes and ships use the word "Mayday" to indicate they are in extreme distress.

In 1923, a senior radio officer, Frederick Stanley Mockford, in Croydon Airport in London, England was asked to think of one word that would be easy to understand for all pilots and ground staff in the event of an emergency. The problem had arisen as voice radio communication slowly became more common, so an equivalent to the Morse code SOS distress signal was needed. Obviously a word like "help" wasn't a good choice for English speakers because it could be used in normal conversations where no one was in distress.

At the time Mockford was considering the request, much of the traffic he was dealing with was between Croydon and Le Bourget Airport in Paris, France. With both the French and English languages in mind, he came up with the somewhat unique word "Mayday", the anglicized spelling of the French pronunciation of the word "m'aider" which means "help me". ...

Right Turn

[Seven lessons Tommy Vietor taught us](#)

by Jennifer Rubin

Tommy Vietor, the former spokesman for President Obama's National Security Council — the entity on which the president depends to synthesize national security information and policy — went on [Fox News](#) to answer questions about Benghazi. Mind you, the entire episode — the failure to keep tabs on the influx of jihadis, the failure to protect Americans in Libya, the massive confusion and misinformation that persisted up through the president's Sept. 25, 2012, speech at the United Nations — was as much the responsibility of the NSC as any other entity. When asked about the [e-mail Ben Rhodes sent out](#), Vietor snarked, "Dude, that was like two years ago." And that's when it became crystal clear how things like Benghazi happened in this administration.

Here are seven lessons we should keep in mind, ably illustrated by Vietor (who subsequently insulted Fox News rather than apologize, on MSNBC, declaring, "I guess you're only supposed to use the Queen's English on Fox."):

1. An error like Benghazi happens because multiple people have a hyper-partisan mindset that submerges everything to politics.
2. The staff reflects the boss. If the staff is rude, immature and callous, the boss almost invariably is.
3. The entire purpose of the video story and the delay in turning over documents was to get far enough past the events that someone like Vietor could say, “Old news.”
4. The Obama team doesn't seem to associate the presidency with a particular level of decorum. Wear jeans. Put your feet up on the desk. Insult opponents. Use coarse language. (The president's insightful analysis of the House budget was that it was a “stinkburger.”) When such arrogance pervades, mistakes — small and large — happen.
5. The attitude that hostile questioning is illegitimate breeds insularity and groupthink. (*How dare they challenge my version of events!*)
6. A president is not the prisoner of bad staff. He hired the staff for a reason. He doesn't fire them (e.g. Jay Carney) for a reason. They are doing what he wants.
7. It is never just one guy. Vietor's behavior is hardly unique among current and former Obama staffers. Carney routinely insults the press, “dissembles” (as Jake Tapper described his “It's not about Benghazi” excuse).

There are certainly serious people who have served in this presidency. Former Defense secretaries Robert Gates and Leon Panetta served honorably and continue to warn the public of the administration's follies. But they are the exception to the rule. They were and are respected by both sides of the aisle, have had a long career in government service, speak and write like adults, do not engage in partisan swipes and understand that their responsibility was to the country, not to a political party or the reelection campaign of their boss. It is noteworthy that these sort of adults have vanished from the administration in the second term. There is plainly no place for them.

Roger L. Simon **[All the President's Dudes](#)**

Hey, [William Goldman](#). You're getting a little long in the tooth — we all are — but America needs your Oscar-winning brilliance for a new screenplay, a must-do sequel to [your original](#) called *All the President's Dudes*.

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Let's start with that ten p.m. phone call between Obama and Hillary on the night of the terror attack. (I'm sorry –video demonstration.) We don't know what they actually said. And since it was only the two of them, we probably never will. But we do know this — they hate each other. But at the same time their futures were inextricably tied in this case. Talk about drah-mah.... all that gnashing of teeth and swallowing of emotion while being forced to agree on their [farshtinkener](#) story. The dialogue writes itself.

And speaking of the former secretary of State, how's this for a scene — Hillary at the Benghazi victims' funeral reassuring the grieving parents [they'll get that "evil filmmaker"](#) who's behind their sons' murders when all the while *she* knows that's baloney? Wow. Great stuff. Straight out of a vampire movie – *Dracula* or even the classic *Nosferatu*. Angelica is just made for it. (I know wrong hair color, but that can be fixed and she's been there before. She killed as Morticia Addams. Just think what she would do with the scenery chewing iconic "[What difference does it make?](#)" scene? Ladies and gentlemen of the Academy, need I say more?)

Now as an older screenwriter myself I know what you're thinking. Wrong demographics. Who wants to make a movie filled with old people? They're all staying home watching *Downton Abbey*. But as you and I know, that's a canard. Because of the nature of the Obama administration, *All the President's Dudes* would be filled with, well, dudes and, naturally, dudettes. Half of Obama's speechwriters are barely old enough to drive. Except for the reliable Chicago crew, POTUS doesn't seem to enjoy surrounding himself with equals. He's a little insecure. But we can keep that between us. You don't have to put it in the movie. Just concentrate on the dudes and dudettes, letting them do what the hormone-infused young do, and casting will handle the rest. Rest assured they'll ignore the cliché about Washington being Hollywood for ugly people. You can even do a little vicarious living of your own in the process.

So what do you think? Do we have a deal? If not, I have a possible sweetener. As you know, Press Secretary Jay Carney has been having a little difficulty lately dealing with the truth. In your 1983 *Adventures in the Screen Trade*, you coined what may be the most famous phrase about Hollywood ever — "[Nobody Knows Anything.](#)" Why not make that about politics and have Carney repeat it endlessly? The phrase could then be employed by every press secretary from now into the future. It might be the ultimate stonewall, but it could save everybody a lot of wasted effort.

Power Line

[Where Was Barry? Where Was Hillary?](#)

by John Hinderaker

As I wrote [here](#), one of the striking features of the White House's latest email production is the complete absence of Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton from the communications on the evening of September 11, 2012. Their names appear only later, when staffers write heartfelt statements about the deaths of four Americans to be released over their names.

So where were they on the fateful night of September 11? Tommy Vietor—formerly Obama’s van driver, now, apparently, a foreign policy spokesman—says that Obama wasn’t in the situation room. Where was he? Resting up for his big fundraising trip to Las Vegas the next day? And how about Hillary? As Paul [wrote](#) earlier this evening, retired Air Force Brigadier General Robert Lovell testified today that the military should have tried to rescue the besieged Americans in Benghazi. Why didn’t they? They were waiting, he testified, for a request from the State Department that never came.

Did Obama and Clinton make a cynical decision to let the defenders of the State Department’s facility in Benghazi die, because sending in reinforcements risked a bloodier, more politically dangerous conflict? Did they freeze up, and fail to make any decision at all? Or were they never even in the loop, as the emails suggest?

After Ted Kennedy drowned Mary Jo Kopechne at Chappaquiddick Island, the Kennedy family’s lawyers and other advisers held a conclave at the Kennedy compound in Hyannis Port to plot a survival strategy. It was reported that Teddy himself did not participate in the meeting. Instead, he was on the beach flying a kite: Teddy was considered too dumb to be of any use.

Are Barack and Hillary viewed the same way within the administration? Are they mere seat-warmers, considered too inept to be involved in serious decision-making? Are golfing and fundraising Obama’s only skills? Is Hillary useless in the clutch? If the Democrats think these questions are going away, they are mistaken. Obama doesn’t have to stand for election again, so maybe he can brazen it out. But if Hillary runs for president in 2016, the question everyone will want to know the answer to is: What did you do on the night of September 11, 2012?

Investor's Business Daily

[What was Obama really doing during Benghazi?](#)

by Andrew Malcolm

Numerous compelling new questions emerged in recent days about the crumbling White House version of the Benghazi tragedy.

They include the faux meme about a "hateful video," who concocted it, why did Obama stick to that fiction so long, why weren't rapid response troops in position on 9/11 of all days, why were U.S. diplomats even in Benghazi after other consuls abandoned the dangerous city, why was Benghazi security *reduced* in the days leading up to the well-planned terrorist attack and why were Amb. Chris Stevens' security pleas ignored and no rescue attempted?

The upcoming Select House Committee on Benghazi will no doubt pursue these and other lines of obvious inquiry. And the answers will certainly play a large role in 2015-16 politics if, as expected, ex-Secy. of State Hillary Clinton decides to seek her party's nomination.

But for us the most pressing, curious and disturbing question today remains: Where was the Commander-in-Chief and what was he doing during an eight-hour attack that left four government employees unprotected, abandoned and dead?

We know now, thanks to [Bret Baier's recent interview with ex-Obama aide Tommy Vietor](#), that the president was not in the Situation Room, the secure, in-house command post where presidents usually go to oversee crises. Clinton and then-Defense Secretary Leon Panetta have both said they talked with Obama by phone that awful evening. And Obama's said he ordered all necessary security for American facilities and representatives abroad.

But that's it! Nothing more.

Not until the next morning when Obama emerged into the Rose Garden with a silent Clinton to denounce the attack, cite the video and vow quick justice to the perpetrators. Then, he flew off to Las Vegas campaign fundraisers before the bodies were cold. Justice remains undelivered 600 days later.

Now, recall the contemporary context: Six weeks out from his reelection. Months into his comforting meme that he had al Qaeda on the run, decimated its leadership and sent Bin Laden to sleep with the fishes.

[Mitt Romney was warning that indecision and lack of preparation were great threats](#) to national security. Obama would mock him as uninformed and outdated for his prescient warnings about Russia remaining a strategic foe of the United States.

The last thing the Chicago crowd wanted was terrorism to interrupt its campaign narrative.

Every White House seeks to appear on top of the news and in charge of everything. Especially this one. Yes, Obama was days late recognizing the seriousness of the Gulf oil spill.

But since, not a single snowstorm blusters through, not the smallest flood flows by, every landslide, school shooting, even earthquakes that do no damage during an Obama golf game prompt a briefing of this president. We even get details on briefings of Obama about things that haven't yet happened, like wildfire seasons.

When Bin Laden perished, we were treated to a detailed "tick-tock," what every White House knows it must provide Washington media after major events. A minute-by-minute recounting of what the president was doing at the time.

There's no way for even conscientious reporters to check all the hand-fed, self-serving details. So, they are passed on to the public as gospel of how our nation's leader addressed the issue, always with seriousness, deliberation and, in the end, calm decisiveness.

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Not a word from him on his whereabouts or activities surrounding the murder of the first U.S. ambassador in three decades and three other brave Americans. Vietor can't remember if he changed certain words in Susan Rice's Benghazi talking points. "Dude, that was two years ago!"

But says he's quite sure Obama was somewhere in the residence that night. Obama has said nothing.

Obama's sensitivity to late-night national emergencies is understandable. Clinton scored huge political points in 2008 noting that John McCain had a lifetime of experience in preparation for 3 a.m. crisis calls. As did she. But Obama had only an anti-Iraq war speech from 2002.

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Weekly Standard

Veni, Vidi, Vietor

by Daniel Halper

An excerpt from [Bill Kristol's weekly newsletter](#):

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Contentions

Watching the Obama Presidency Die

by Peter Wehner

The news for Democrats, already bad this year, just got worse. Consider [this story in the USA Today](#):

A nationwide USA TODAY/Pew Research Center Poll shows the strongest tilt to Republican candidates at this point in a midterm year in at least two decades, including before partisan “waves” in 1994 and 2010 that swept the GOP into power. Though Election Day is six months away — a lifetime in politics — at the moment, Democrats are saddled by angst over the economy, skepticism about the health care law and tepid approval of the president.

The specific data point worth focusing on is that registered voters favor a generic Republican over a generic Democrat by four points (47 percent v. 43 percent). As *USA Today* points out, “[The GOP] lead in the generic congressional ballot is the biggest at this point for Republicans in the past 20 years. In 1994, when the GOP would gain control of the House and Senate, Democrats held a 2-point advantage in the spring of the election year. In 2010, when Republicans would win back the House, the two sides were even.”

That’s not all.

By more than two-to-one, 65 percent v. 30 percent, Americans say they want the president elected in 2016 to pursue different policies and programs than the Obama administration, rather than similar ones. By more than two-to-one, Americans are dissatisfied with the direction of the country. And by more than two-to-one, 40 percent v. 17 percent, they assess the nation’s economic conditions as poor, not excellent or good. Thirty-nine percent of those surveyed rate their financial situation as “only fair” and 23 percent call it poor.

By a ten-point margin, 53 percent v. 43 percent, those surveyed say the issue of which party controls Congress will be a factor in their vote—and those who say they feel that way are more likely to support the Republican contender. In addition, 26 percent say they think of their vote as a vote against Obama while only 16 percent as a vote for him.

The mid-term elections are still six months away, but the political landscape for Democrats is perilous. And the odds are as good or better that things will get worse, not better, for Democrats between now and November.

The American public, at least at this point, seem intent on deliver a stinging rebuke to President Obama, his party, and liberalism itself. The left, knowing this, is going to become even more desperate, more *ad hominem*, and more deranged in their attacks.

It won’t alter the outcome. We are watching the Obama presidency die. The cause of death? Massive incompetence. Flawed ideology. And the Obama agenda coming into contact with reality.

The Belmont Club

The Fat Lady

by Richard Fernandez

President Obama is still received throughout the Western alliance as the “leader of the free world”, a position American presidents have held *de facto* since the end of the Second World War.

Despite the increasingly strident domestic criticism of the president and falling poll numbers, other leaders find it impolitic — not to mention diplomatically improper — to openly express doubts about Obama’s character or competence.

So they’ve taken a page out of his playbook and decided to do a little backstabbing themselves.

The exact moment when [the Benghazi](#) crisis began to clip Obama’s wings will probably be identified as August 29, 2013. That is the date the British parliament refused to join Barack Obama’s impending strike on Syria after it had crossed his “Red Line”.

Congress couldn’t stop him. The American press couldn’t delay him but the British parliament, by pulling out of the deal, tossed a wrench into the gears.

And now the Germans are doing the same thing. Though the Washington press try to portray Obama’s inaction against Putin as the result of his generous nature, Obama is hampered by a more basic problem: Germany won’t go along.

[NBC news](#) says that while “Obama wants the United States and Europe to stand together and force Russia to rethink its moves in Ukraine.” But Angela Merkel isn’t taking orders. The German leader was in Washington to discuss how far she is willing to play along. “She is under intense pressure from business interests at home, plus segments of the German public, not to hit Russia too hard, said Julianne Smith, a former deputy national security adviser to Vice President Joe Biden.”

Adding an element of tension, Germany is still furious about National Security Agency eavesdropping, which reportedly extended to Merkel’s own phone.

“It will not be all sweetness and light. She’s coming. That’s important,” said Smith, director of the Strategy and Statecraft Program at the Center for a New American Security, a nonpartisan policy center in Washington.

Most of the heavy lifting in a sanctions regime will be done by Merkel. She’s not in Washington to rubber-stamp orders issued by the Leader of the Free World. If anything president Obama is being told how far he can go, like a child put on an allowance.

Only a comparatively small percentage of the American public may have noticed that despite the happy talk reported in the papers Obama failed to get a trade deal during his trip to Japan. The [Australian Broadcasting Corporation](#) writes, “American president Barack Obama has left Japan, having failed to lock in a bilateral trade deal between the two countries.”

Australia signed its own trade agreement with Japan earlier this month that will see tariffs reduced across a number of commodities, although the agriculture sector was largely disappointment with that deal.

The American farm lobby expressed its irritation that Australia was able to secure a deal with Japan where the US has not.

Shinzo Abe is less deferential too. Taken together these actions are suggestive of a kind of low-key circumscription of Obama by key members of the alliance. They are now slow-walking him, fobbing him off or — in the case of the British — outright refusing to go along, almost as if a ‘no confidence’ vote in his leadership had been cast behind his back.

Russia perhaps sensing this, may be trying to further diminish Obama’s stature by ridicule. Recently it retaliated against American sanctions placed on Putin’s inner circle by enacting sanctions of its own. There’s a “‘black list’ of Americans banned from Russia [including] Obama campaign fundraisers tied to the LGBT community and senior Congressmen” according to [The Daily Beast](#).

But the ridicule is probably superfluous plus there probably aren’t many Obama LGBT bundlers who are fixing to vacation in Moscow anyway. It does indicate a belief Obama is vulnerable to gibes.

However, whatever Putin may do Obama’s political fate will ultimately be determined domestically, and that may be the biggest danger to the president of all. [Glenn Reynolds](#) notes that he is “lawyering up”, hiring W. Neil Eggleston as chief counsel. “Eggleston worked as a White House lawyer under Clinton, handling politically explosive issues like the Whitewater controversy, and later represented the former president during the investigation into the Monica Lewinsky affair.”

Hiring Eggleston mirrors House speaker [John Boehner](#) announcement that he intends to create a new select committee to investigate the September 11, 2012 terrorist attack in Benghazi.

“The House committees that have been investigating this attack have done extraordinary work, using their subpoena power, holding dozens of hearings, and conducting hundreds of interviews. Without this work we would not know much that we do today. But it’s clear that questions remain, and the administration still does not respect the authority of Congress to provide proper oversight. This dismissiveness and evasion requires us to elevate the investigation to a new level. I intend for this select committee to have robust authority, and I will expect it to work quickly to get answers for the American people and the families of the victims.

Not always the most daredevil of organizations, a Republican leadership which has been treading water on Benghazi for a year and a half has now nerved itself to strike very nearly at the president. It can only be because they sense Obama’s vulnerability and like a pack of wolves sensing wounded prey are gingerly advancing. In politics timing is everything and maybe Boehner figures “it’s time”.

His nonstick coating has worn out.

While Obama has not quite lost his position as “Leader of the Free World” he seems to have been consensually demoted. While there is no imminent danger to the president from the Congressional select committee on Benghazi, that could change very quickly if the information cofferdam surrounding the president begins to crumble and damaging secrets begin to emerge. The policy background surrounding Benghazi involves matters many times more serious than the attempted

burglary which toppled Richard Nixon. The potential for something serious to come out of it is high.

But there'll be some time yet. There's a saying that it isn't over till the Fat Lady sings. She hasn't quite sung yet, but she is certainly warming up her tonsils.

Today I Found Out

Why People on Planes and Ships Use the Word "Mayday" When in Extreme Distress

by Terrynn Boulton



Today I found out why those aboard planes and ships use the word "Mayday" to indicate they are in extreme distress.

In 1923, a senior radio officer, Frederick Stanley Mockford, in Croydon Airport in London, England was asked to think of one word that would be easy to understand for all pilots and ground staff in the event of an emergency. The problem had arisen as voice radio communication slowly became more common, so an equivalent to the Morse code SOS distress signal was needed. Obviously a word like "help" wasn't a good choice for English speakers because it could be used in normal conversations where no one was in distress.

At the time Mockford was considering the request, much of the traffic he was dealing with was between Croydon and Le Bourget Airport in Paris, France. With both the French and English languages in mind, he came up with the somewhat unique word "Mayday", the anglicized spelling of the French pronunciation of the word "m'aider" which means "help me".

Four years later, in 1927, the International Radiotelegraph Convention of Washington made "Mayday" the official voice distress call used only to communicate the most serious level of distress, such as with life-threatening emergencies.

When using Mayday in a distress call, it is traditional to repeat it three times in a row, "Mayday, Mayday, Mayday". This is to make sure it is easily distinguishable from a message about a Mayday call and from any similar sounding phrases in noisy conditions.

In situations where a vessel requires assistance, not from grave and imminent danger, a distress call of “pan-pan” can be used instead. Essentially, it means you need aid, but you don’t need support personnel to necessarily drop what they’re doing right that instant and come help you, as with a Mayday.

Like Mayday, pan-pan is the anglicized spelling of a French word, in this case “panne”, which means “broken/failure/breakdown”. Also, as with Mayday, one should state it three consecutive times: “pan-pan pan-pan pan-pan”, followed by which station(s) you are addressing and your last known location, nature of your emergency, etc.

If there is no reply to a Mayday or pan-pan call by the Coast Guard or other emergency agency, and a couple minutes have passed since the last one, some other radio source, such as another ship or plane that received the call, should transmit their own Mayday call, but on behalf of the ship or plane that first made the call, repeating the pertinent information they heard when they received the Mayday message.





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