

# The Stun Solo Takeoff

by [Carl Filipiak](#)

It's 1987 or so in New York and I'm in a recording session that was part of the prize Mike (not his real name) and I won for coming in first and second place in "Marshall's Stun Solo Contest". We received equipment, a dinner and a hang with Jim Marshall (his real name!).

The story begins on our way back to Baltimore from New York. I know that anyone in a rock band can understand that you have to pay some attention (sometimes too much) to your appearance. This was one of those times and Mike was notorious for spending hours on his hair. As a result, we missed our flight and had to be driven to all three major airports before we found a return flight home. Not fun, since we had a gig that night.

The only flight out was a twin-engine propeller plane that held about fifty people. It looked like something that wasn't going to get off the ground and this only adds to the enjoyment of the moment! We get on and we're in the back of the plane as it starts to taxi. The attendant is in the front going through her bit and it sounds like we're in a World War II movie because of the engine noise. Only one engine is on, however, and Mike and I both make a comment about it.

"It'll probably come on in a few seconds," we reassured one another. Well, those seconds passed and the engine still hadn't come on.

"What do you think?" I asked as the plane gained a little more speed.

"Do you think the captain knows?" was Mike's reply.

Now the other two guys in the band sitting across from us hear our concern. Somebody asks, "What's up?" We tell them the propeller on our side hasn't started turning yet and they don't believe it.

"Don't tell us that. It's not even funny!"

Meanwhile the plane is moving much faster and the moment of truth arrives. Mike is now convinced that the pilot is unaware that only one engine is working and that we're going to crash! The plane is picking up more speed and the noise is getting louder. Hollywood couldn't do it any better. The tension finally gets to Mike and he's yelling to the attendant in the front of the plane who, because of the motor noise, can't hear him! He's yelling at the top of his lungs, "Tell the Captain the second engine hasn't come on!"

He's so freaked out that he can't get his seatbelt unbuckled. (Mike, I apologize!) Every head has now turned as if there is a terrorist aboard. He's flailing out of his seat and running up to the front.

"Tell the pilot the engine isn't on!"

Calmly the attendant tells him that it's normal procedure to only use one engine on takeoff and could he please return to his seat. Not one to miss an opportunity to save my own butt, I yell out, "I fly all the time and tried to tell him, but he wouldn't listen."

Well, maybe you had to be there or maybe the lesson is that there's a fine line between being a hero and a knucklehead! Anyway, the drinks the stewardess sent back went a long way, and so did the look on Mike's face as he walked back up the aisle...