

# Revealing Cooper's Coding Methods – and Hidden Highlife

**With public clamoring for more Rackstraw evidence, sleuths deliver the damning goods**

**Media Release Embargo, 8/8/18:** Last month's court-released hijacker "confession" letter has led to a firestorm of new interest in the alleged writer, FBI—"cleared" Cooper suspect Robert W. Rackstraw Sr. So the cold case organizers behind the archived message discoveries, Thomas J. and Dawna Colbert, have decided to reveal all the official Army code-breaking methods that helped finger Rackstraw ([Page 2-3](#)).

The couple's acclaimed PI team is also unmasking another of the convicted felon's secrets: The 74-year-old San Diegan that many believe dove away with the \$200,000 airline ransom has stated for decades he's destitute and without any permanent shelter. But that's now known to be an elaborate cover story.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Robert Rackstraw*

Robert Rackstraw, Amici  
Disabled homeless veteran

Rackstraw's "disabled homeless veteran" tag line, posted in a 2017 federal brief (left; about Colberts' FOIA), has also found its way into newspapers as revered as *The Washington Post*, on blogs, and in online pleas for legal help. At first look, the one-time Cooper candidate's poverty claims are backed by an \$18,889 fine in 2010 for failure to pay 3 years of state and federal taxes.

But a document hunter on the Colberts' team dug up 20-year-old Riverside County divorce records that revealed the truth: In a methodical and discreet split with his wife #3 – a split stretching from a 1988 estrangement to a final 1998 decree – Rackstraw told the judge he'd privately agreed at the beginning to turn over his 12-acre hilltop estate in Wildomar (photo available) to this now-single mate. A half-year later, she sold the home and property for \$79K more than the Cooper booty. Today you'll find ex-wife #3 in a tony condo on San Diego's famed Bankers Hill (below) – with a "roommate" named Rackstraw.

His first former spouse told the team in 2013 "they never really separated." But in 2016, the convicted con man gave a now-estranged Facebook girlfriend an odd excuse as to why they're still a pair: "Got divorced 30 years ago. Then she invited me for one of her great dinners and [I] just stayed. Complain about each other every day. Never remarried. When it gets unbearable I go to my boat (below)."

All this puzzles the team: Why hasn't a white-collar crime unit, let alone the FBI, rocked their boat?



L to R: Ex-wife #3's posh condo; couple's biplane ride; at Broadmoor Hotel party, CO; his yacht club cruiser, "Poverty Sucks"

**NOTE:** Ex-wife #3 is 1 of 3 separate women who have claimed RWR converted 1970s cash into gold Krugerrands.

**FYI:** Divorce Court docs, Army code book, surveillance pics of couple & Rackstraw's on-camera ambush available.

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## Letter #5's Typed Truths:

I left no fingerprints  
I wore a toupee  
I wore putty make-up

ASA (Army Security Agency)

371st (ASA's 371 Radio Research Unit, AKA "Project Left Bank")

Top Secret

ccccccc Wash Post ~ 717171684\*

New York Times - TBA

Seattle Times - TBA

Los Angeles Times - 7698QA2753

11th GS (The 11th General Support Co.)

ASA code-buster Rick Sherwood's first unmasked Cooper message was found in typed Letter #5. He used the Army's Alpha-Numerical code (A=1, B=2, etc.) that Rackstraw in fact learned in 1968. **This proved he was Cooper because:** 1) The 1971 writer's claims about fingerprints, toupee and putty make-up were secret case details that only the FBI, key passengers and Cooper would've known; 2) according to the suspect's former Army commander, Rackstraw was the only Vietnam solider who served in all 3 of these unique units (ASA, 371<sup>st</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup> GS) and, like FBI case details, two of them were secret until the '80s; and 3) Letters 1 & 4 were mailed within 30 minutes of his remote CA hideaway – 500 miles from hijack.

**Letter #5) A:** Los Angeles Times – “**7698QA2753**”:  $47+Q/17+A/1 = 65$ ; **11<sup>th</sup> GS** =  $11+T/20+H/8+G/7+S/19 = 65$  (Times' code was found in archive; “11<sup>th</sup> General Support” was 1<sup>st</sup> Cav's chopper repair and VIP “Uber”)

**B:** Washington Post – “**CCCCCC**”:  $C/3 \times 7 = 21$ ; **ASA** =  $A/1+S/19+A/1 = 21$  (Army Security Agency)

**C:** “**Wash Post**” =  $W/23+A/1+S/19+H/8+P/16+O/15+S/19+T/10 = 121$ ; **Top Secret** =  $T/20+O/15+P/16+S/19+E/5+C/3+R/18+E/5+T/20 = 121$

Sherwood: “I saw this newspaper's title was the only shortened 1 of 4 cc'd, and it was between 2 secret units. Once I uncovered “Wash Post” & “Top Secret” had matching totals, I plugged it in.”

**D:** “**717171684\***”:  $42 + * \text{ (If } * \text{ is 8) } = 50$ ; **371<sup>st</sup>** =  $11+S/19+T/20 = 50$

Sherwood: “I saw the three 71s” as a hint to the unit I and Rackstraw shared, ASA's 371<sup>st</sup> Radio Research Unit / “Project Left Bank” (Bunkerized Sherwood was Rackstraw's air-traffic controller)

**Letter #1) A:** “**Thanks For Hospitality**” =  $20+6+8+9+20+25 = 88$ ; “**Can FBI Catch Me**” =  $18+17+35+18 = 88$

Sherwood: “The cut-and-pasted ‘ity’ (in Hospital) was bolded and looked different, so I decided to count all three. I then spotted sideway words (below) and I knew that was a separate message.”

**B:** “**Attention! Was In A Rut. D.B. Cooper**” =  $1+23+9+1+18+4+2+3 = 61$ ; **SWS** =  $19+23+19 = 61$  (SWS is Ft. Bragg's Special Warfare School where Green Berets taught Rackstraw his coding)

**Letter #2) A:** “**I Enjoyed The Grey Cup Game. Am Leaving Vancouver**” =  $9+5+20+7+3+7+1+12+22 = 86$ ;

“**If Catch I Am CIA**” =  $15+35+9+14+13 = 86$

**B:** Thanks For Your Hospitality” =  $20+6+25+8 = 59$ ; **RWR** =  $18+23+18 = 59$  (Robert W. Rackstraw)

**Letter #3) “Am alive and doing well in home town P.O.... D.B. Cooper”** (Each letter cut from June/70 Playboy)

Sherwood: “In a language of few words, there were too many in this. But because he carefully cut and pasted every letter in the words individually, I assumed it was a code within a code. I tried subtracting made-up words to bring down the letter count and reveal the cypher. On my second try, I took out the letters from the first/last name of Playboy Playmate **Elaine Morton**. That left 27. Bingo! There it was:

Name Removed: “Am Alive And Doing Well In Home Town P.O.... D.B. Cooper”; it left 27 letters: **AMVADDOINGWLLINHEWPODBCOOPE** = 27 = “**I HAVE POB AND CODE WILL GO DOWN PM**”

**Letter #4) “Plan Ahead For Retirement Income”** =  $16+1+6+18+9 = 50$ ; **NGJS** =  $14+7+10+19 = 50$

(NGJS is at Ft. Benning, GA, where “National Guardsman Rackstraw went to Jump School in 1967”)

## Letter #6

March 26, 1972

The Portland Oregonian Newspaper  
Portland, Oregon

Gentlemen:

This letter is too let you know I am not dead but really alive and just back from the Bahamas, so your silly troopers up there can stop looking for me. That is just how dumb this government is. I like your articles about me but you can stop them now. D. B. Cooper is not real.

I had to do something with the experience Uncle taught me, so here I am, a very rich man. Uncle gave too much of it to world idiots and no work for me. I had to do it to relieve myself of frustration. I want out of the system and saw a way through good ole Unk. Now you know. I am going around the world and they will never find me because I am smarter than the system's lackey cops and lame duck leaders. Now it is Uncle's turn to weep and pay one of it's own some cash for a change. (And please tell the lackey cops D. B. Cooper is not my real name).

Sincerely, A Rich Man

Code-Breaker Rick Sherwood spotted 4 phrases or words that repeat: 1) "D.B. Cooper is not real"; 2) "Uncle" or "Unk" (AKA Uncle Sam); 3) "the system"; and 4) "lackey cops."

#1 & #4 are in this highlighted sentence:

"And please tell the lackey cops D.B. Cooper is not my real name."

"I'm LT Robert W. Rackstraw, D.B. Cooper is not my real name."  
(Concealed message decoded)

"And(19+) please(58+) tell(49+) the(33+) lackey(57+) cops(53)" = 269  
"I'm(22+) LT(32+) Robert(60+) W.(23+) Rackstraw(114)" = 269

#2 & #3 are in this highlighted sentence:

"I want out of the system and saw a way through good ole Unk."

"I want out of the system and saw a way by hijacking one jet plane."  
(Hidden message decoded)

"...through(97+) good(41+) ole(32+) Unk(46)." = 216  
"...by(27+) hijacking(72+) one(34+) jet(35+) plane(48)." = 216

Rackstraw's Vietnam commander, LTC Ken Overturf (ret.), stated: "With the 'Basic Cryptography' Army manual now in my possession, we have doctrinal validation of the process Rick Sherwood used to decipher all the messages."

Code-Breaking Copyrighted  
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## Post-Hijacking "Cooper" Letter Mailings to Newspapers



Rackstraw mailed the notes to newspapers in order to taunt the FBI and send messages to his get-away partners. After the first 2 were printed, the agents snapped them up, along with the 4 others before they could be published.

After the first mailing, J. Edgar Hoover oversaw the isolated hunt for the writer's trail. They came within just 30 miles of Rackstraw's secret hide-away.

One retired senior agent called the cold case team's 2012 discovery of his remote home "*an 8 out of 10*," evidentiary-wise. But the Seattle Cooper case agent told the sleuths the letters were "*discounted*" decades ago.

In 2018, the team discovered what decisively linked the six Cooper notes to Rackstraw: his buried Army-coded messages.