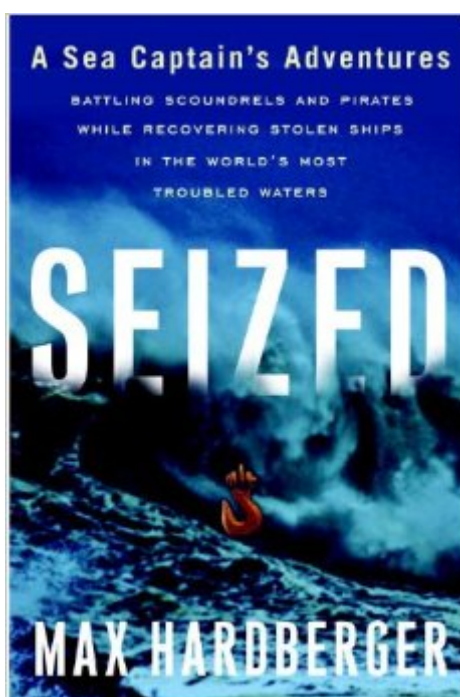


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# Seized: A Sea Captain's Adventures Battling Scoundrels And Pirates While Recovering Stolen Ships In The World's Most Troubled Waters



## Synopsis

Seized throws open the hatch on the shadowy world of maritime shipping, where third-world governments place exorbitant liens against ships, pirates seize commercial vessels with impunity, crooks and con artists reign supreme on the docks and in the shipyards—and hapless owners have to rely on sea captain Max Hardberger to recapture their ships and win justice on the high seas. A ship captain, airplane pilot, lawyer, teacher, writer, adventurer, and raconteur, Max Hardberger recovers stolen freighters for a living. In Seized, he takes us on a real-life journey into the mysterious world of freighters and shipping, where fortunes are made and lost by the whims of the waves. Desperate owners hire Max Hardberger to extract or steal back ships that have been illegitimately seized by putting together a mission-impossible team to sail them into international waters under cover of darkness. It's a high stakes assignment—if Max or his crew are caught, they risk imprisonment or death. Seized takes readers behind the scenes of the multibillion dollar maritime industry, as he recounts his efforts to retrieve freighters and other vessels from New Orleans to the Caribbean, from East Germany to Vladivostok, Russia, and from Greece to Guatemala. He resorts to everything from disco dancing to women of the night to distract the shipyard guards, from bribes to voodoo doctors to divert attention and buy the time he needs to sail a ship out of a foreign port without clearance. Seized is adventure nonfiction at its best.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Max Hardberger's Seized, a Sea Captains Adventures - Battling Scoundrels and Pirates while Recovering Stolen Ships in the World's Most Troubled Waters is a fascinating account of one man's

remarkable career and personal journey. In addition to working professionally as a crop-duster, school teacher, lawyer, and ship's captain, Max Hardberger developed the rather unusual specialty of returning stolen property, very large stolen property. He steals back ships wrongly seized in foreign ports and returns them to their owners. There is a cliché that petty thieves steal with guns while the big thieves steal with pens. Hardberger's career as a "ship extractor" began when as captain of the bulk carrier, Naruda, which had just discharged a cargo of rice in Haiti, a claim was filed against the ship for a short discharge. The claim was false and even if valid, should have been filed against shipper and not the ship. Nevertheless an unscrupulous merchant, paying off a corrupt judge in a third world port, just might have succeeded in stealing the ship. With guile, stealth, liquor for the guards, and a bit of bribery Captain Hardberger succeeded in slipping the ship out of Cap Haitian. It was the beginning of a highly varied career as a ship thief. In *Seized*, Captain Hardberger describes sneaking ships out of Venezuela, Haiti, Trinidad, Belgium, Honduras, Mexico and Greece, as well as flying forty seven crop dusters out of East Germany. In the process he had to cope with corrupt officials, the Russian mob, political unrest, and a mixed bag of scoundrels, pirates and con men. He describes the difficulty of sneaking ship out of port. Most ships have diesel engines which can make a lot of noise in the dead of night when trying to slip out of a port unnoticed.

Captain Hardberger is a very unique and driven man! He is licensed to serve as Captain on any oceangoing merchant ship, he's a flying instructor, and has passed the Bar Exam in California, certainly a unique set of credentials. Based on this book, he applies the energy and dedication it would take to acquire such a varied skill set to every task he undertakes as a professional. The book reads as a series of stories about different situations, mostly involving something to do with a ship being held in port illegitimately or through corruption (one story involves slipping several dozen cropdusting planes out of East Germany in the chaotic days just before German reunification). He gives us a lot of insight into the details of how merchant ships do business in a wide variety of ports, and the problems this creates both for the ships and for the merchants and service providers who tend to their needs. These are very readable, and really do seem like something from *Mission Impossible* in some cases. Less obvious is the darker side of his life--The relationships in his life suffer because he is continually traveling overseas, and is frequently in imminent peril of being imprisoned. And often he has difficulty getting paid or the men his clients hire to help him don't get paid, or get paid a pittance after risking death or imprisonment to get someone else's big-money asset out. A significant number of the ships he rescues are lost at sea or otherwise go out of service only a couple of years after his involvement with them. It wasn't "Gripping" in the sense that I was

lost in his world hanging on every word, but it is well-written and I kept reading. I finished the book in one evening with a couple of short breaks.

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