

A Letter from the Publisher

The writer of this week's cover story is no stranger to the pains and pleasures of athletic activity. Before joining TIME last March, Associate Editor J.D. Reed spent five years writing for SPORTS ILLUSTRATED. But Reed, 41, is only a recent convert to participatory sports. A perpetual dieter, he estimates that he has lost almost 450 lbs. over the past 15 years and gained back nearly all of them. He blames his exercise program, which he describes as "mostly TV-channel switching. My idea of aerobics was shaking the popcorn popper, and isometrics was pushing together the two halves of a sandwich." A year ago, however, he took up jogging, and the 30 lbs. he then lost have stayed off. "I'm possibly the slowest jogger in rural New Jersey," Reed says. "People walking to the store regularly pass me by."

At the typewriter, though, Reed is a regular sprinter. A former professor of English, he had published three volumes of poetry by the time his first novel came out last year. Called *Free Fall*, it is based on the unsolved 1971 skyjacking of a commercial airliner by "D.B. Cooper," who parachuted into oblivion—and popular legend—with \$200,000 in ransom money. Reed offers an exciting and altogether

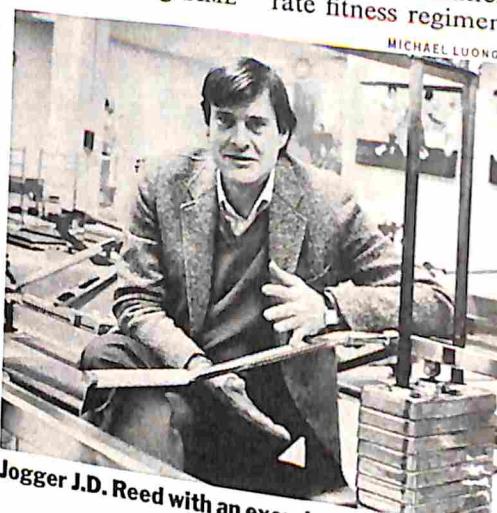
plausible account of what might have happened after the jacker did his Geronimo. A movie made from the novel, *The Pursuit of D.B. Cooper*, opens next month.

The TIME staffers who reported the cover story follow separate fitness regimens. Says Boston Correspondent John Y.

"Whenever I get the urge to exercise down until it goes away." In Detroit, respondent Christopher Redman also thought all forms of public muscle building were unseemly. "I'm a closet exerciser," he says, "but now I'm seriously thinking about coming out." Senior Reporter-Researcher Sue Rafferty assumed a running program she had stopped some years ago, and recently completed a 13.1-mile half-marathon in an eminently respectable 1 hr. 53 min. Rafferty swims a mile every morning before work. "Swimming and running," she says, "my total tranquilizer." Senior Editor Timothy Foote, who edited the cover, is a fitness veteran who started 20 years ago with the Royal Canadian Air Force flight, and now runs regularly, though he

ly. Says he: "Running, in any sport, is unquestionably the best way to dispel free-floating angst."

John A. Meyers



Jogger J.D. Reed with an exercise machine

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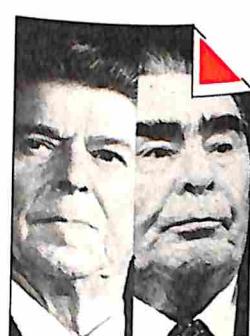
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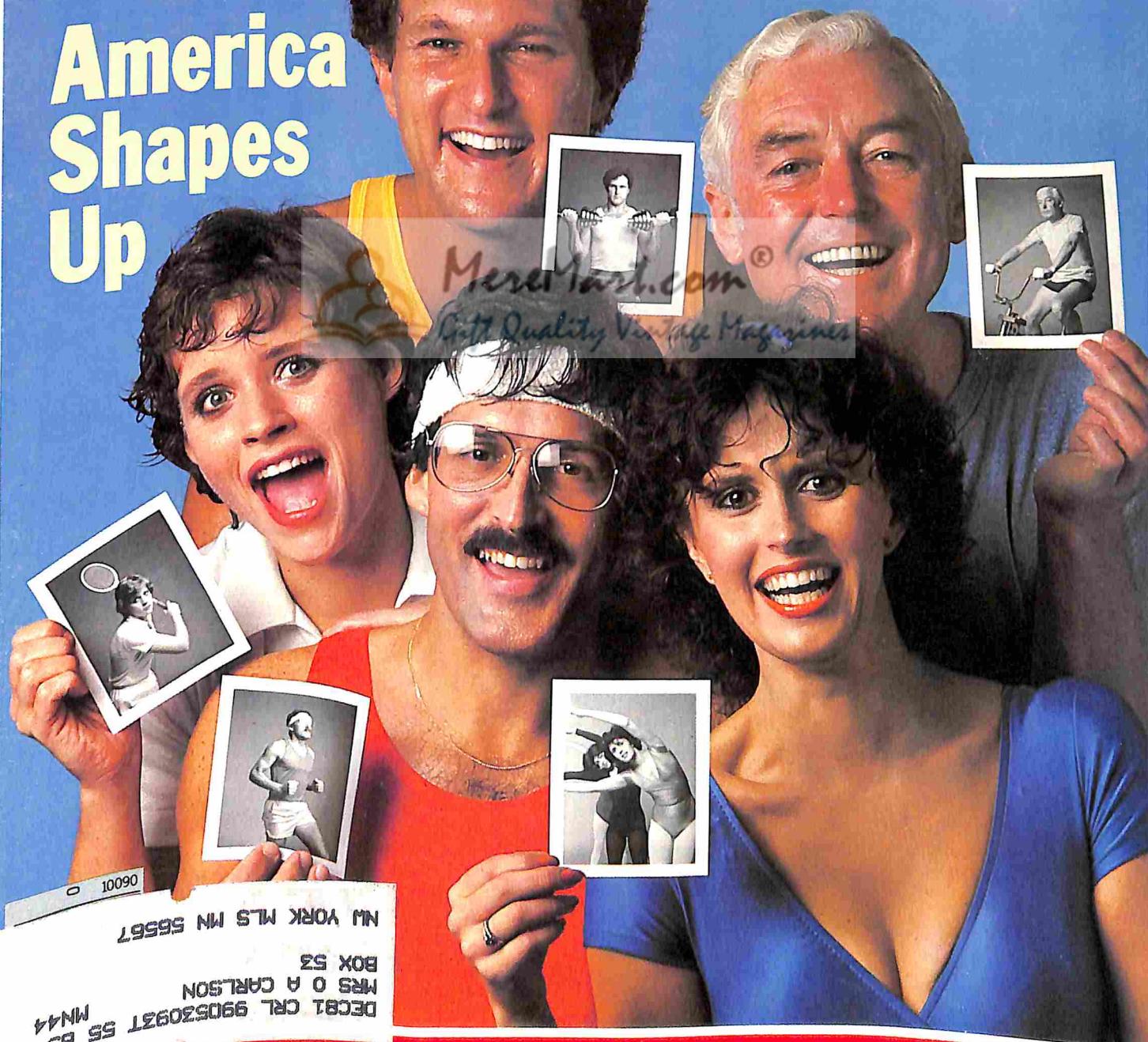
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