

# Book Review

*Author battles scoundrels and pirates to 'steal' ships*

By **MARK FISCHER**

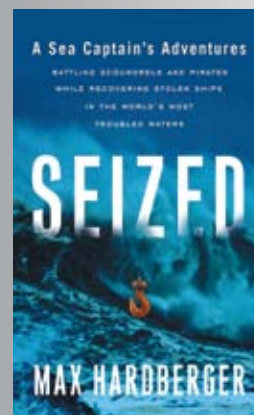
Not everyone who hijacks an ocean freighter is an armed Somali pirate. He can also be an unscrupulous harbormaster, or a dishonest custom's official from a Third World country looking for a bribe. Or sometimes, your boat can be "seized" when and where you don't expect it.

Author Max Hardberger is the man to call to reclaim your ship and get it out of sticky situations around the world. Quite simply, Hardberger "steals" ships for a living. For many ship owners, he is the agent of last resort — the go-to guy when all legal means to reclaim a ship have been exhausted. To accomplish this, Hardberger walks into some of the most exotic, and sometimes not so exotic, climes on

earth, where you can feel the danger and excitement ahead. Hardberger makes an adrenalin rush seem routine.

When you read of his adventures you think that just one of these tales would provide a good enough story for anyone who wants to regale a crowd and maybe get a free drink or two in the process. How about employing prostitutes and witch doctors to help reclaim a ship? Hardberger has over a half dozen of these stories, and not all of them include a ship.

How about trying to get 50 crop dusters out of the former East Germany and deliver them to Venezuela with only two weeks notice? Hardberger weaves these tales around his knowledge of the maritime industry, as well as the extensive contacts he has developed over the years. Without his vast connection of friends, government officials and thieves to assist him, Hardberger wouldn't even try to free a client's ship, let alone be successful at it.



**SEIZED: A SEA CAPTAIN'S ADVENTURES**  
By **MAX HARDBERGER**  
**BROADWAY BOOKS • HARDCOVER; \$25**

The author writes as he obviously has lived. He comes at you as if he were in a bar fight, with both fists in your face. From the beginning of *Seized*, Hardberger immediately grabs your attention and your imagination. The book is a good read. It's a fast-paced action account of what can be accomplished with some guile, brains and luck. I recommend it for mariners and non-mariners alike.

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