

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Date 12/1/71

WILLIAM JOHN (BILL) RATA CZAK, residence 3407 Selman Drive, Burnsville, Minnesota, was interviewed at the Reno Airport, Reno, Nevada, on the late evening of November 24, 1971, and early morning hours of November 25, 1971. He identified himself as the third officer on Northwest Airlines Flight 305.

RATA CZAK advised that according to some notes he had made concerning the incident, it was at 2759 Zulu time or 3:59 p.m. Pacific Standard Time that he received an emergency signal from hostess TINA MUCKLOW on the intercom with a series of bells signaling that they had trouble on board. They had a pre-arranged flight signal for such emergencies and he made a notation in his book of the time of this notification.

Almost immediately thereafter, he received a note from TINA MUCKLOW advising she thought they were being hijacked and added she was not kidding.

Subsequently, hostess FLORENCE SCHAFFNER brought a note on what appeared to be a standard 6 x 9 tablet written with a felt pen as well as an envelope that had notations also containing the figure \$200,000, two back parachutes, two chest packs and under it a time of 5:00 p.m.

Hostess MUCKLOW then went back to the compartment and sat with the hijacker at which time he insisted that all of the above items be physically present and waiting for them at the Seattle Airport upon their arrival and prior to their landing.

RATA CZAK received the impression that the above hijacking had been carefully thought out in advance in that the hijacker specified that the money was to be furnished in a knapsack and even insisted that a discarded match cover be returned to him. He also insisted on the return of the original note and the envelope and appeared especially careful to see that nothing of his was left behind.

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On 11/24/71 at Reno, Nevada File# LV 164-60

by SAC HAROLD E. CAMPBELL, JR., and  
SA H. E. HINDERLITER, JR. HEH/skh Date dictated 11/30/71

RATACZAK stated that as soon as they verified the intentions of the hijacker, they immediately contacted the company via their radio connections concerning the situation but they did not alert the passengers nor did they press the emergency transponder code button signaling a hijacking to the control towers due to the hijacker's insistence of "no funny stuff".

They subsequently radioed the Seattle approach control tower and requested holding instructions in order they could remain airborne for the approximate 1 1/2 hours which was estimated to be required in order that all of the items requested by the hijacker could be obtained.

RATACZAK noted that all of the demands of the hijacker were forwarded to the cockpit through hostess MUCKLOW and at no time did he have occasion to personally observe or have any direct contact with him.

Inasmuch as Seattle was the destination and actual termination point for that flight, an announcement from the cockpit was made to the passengers that they were burning off excess fuel which helped put the other passengers at ease. In addition, the hostesses were instructed not to serve any additional drinks to any of the passengers.

It was further established that hostess MUCKLOW was to act as intermediary between the hijacker and the individuals meeting the plane to supply his demands. The chief pilot for Northwest Airlines and one other individual were to be in the first vehicle with the money, the second vehicle was to carry the stairs so that the hostess could exit from the front of the plane with only one driver designated for that vehicle, with a third vehicle being a fuel truck, containing a driver only which was to remain in a 10 or 11 o'clock position from the plane in order that all would be in full view of the hijacker at all times.

After the plane had landed and the initial delivery made of the money and parachutes, the hijacker then forwarded through hostess MUCKLOW the following instructions which he also listed: (1) They were going to Mexico City non-stop

or if they could not reach Mexico City, anywhere in Mexico; (2) they would fly with landing gear down and flaps down; (3) they would not fly above 10,000 feet; (4) they would fly with the lights out in the cabin; (5) they were not to land in the U. S. for fuel or for any other reason; (6) there was to be no one aft of the first class curtain; (7) he indicated that after taking off, hostess MUCKLOW would be allowed to visit the cockpit; (8) he wanted the rear door open and the stairs extended for taking off.

RATACZAK noted that at this point they informed him that it would be impossible to make a take-off with that aircraft in that position and the hijacker subsequently agreed to having the door closed with the stipulation that hostess MUCKLOW could lower the stairs after the plane was airborne. RATACZAK noted that all of the above instructions were given on the ground at Seattle orally by the hijacker through TINA during the period she was carrying on the parachutes.

After the release of the passengers, and during the period of re-fueling, the hijacker became considerably annoyed at the delay in re-fueling and at the point where 96 per cent of the fuel was on board, he implied that the procedure was being deliberately delayed. The hijacker displayed a specific knowledge of flying and aircraft in general and that one in particular and they were finally able to convince him that the time being utilized was entirely necessary.

They subsequently informed the hijacker that under the operating conditions that he had stipulated it would be impossible for them to reach Mexico City and he thereafter countered with the possible destination of Phoenix. Each point that he mentioned would be considered and rejected with the cities of Yuma; Sacramento and Reno being mentioned and a final agreement reached whereby the plane would fly to Reno, Nevada, as its initial destination.

RATACZAK stated that after take-off they flew at an indicated air speed of 170 knots which would have provided an estimated ground speed of 205 miles per hour.

The hijacker was questioned concerning his intentions with regard to the bomb package and he responded through MUCKLOW that he would either take it with him or disarm it at the time of his departure. Upon their departure from Seattle, they followed a course known as "Victor 23", which is a standard low altitude routing to Portland, and received clearance from Sacramento tower for Victor 23 at 10,000 feet.

RATACZAK recalled that initially after receiving descriptive data from hostess MUCKLOW, they radioed the company for any likely suspects or modus operandi and the company furnished the name of R. SIMMONS who had previously been arrested for being intoxicated and was suspected as a possibility of being the hijacker.

RATACZAK stated that departure from Seattle was made at 7:36 p.m. and at approximately 8:05 p.m. he called the hijacker on the intercom, inquired whether he could hear and whether there was anything they could do for him. The hijacker responded in the negative and the crew then decided that the hijacker was on board for the duration and they decided against any more tests or contacts with him until after they arrived at Reno, Nevada. Upon approaching Reno Airport, they tried to contact the hijacker with no response and they notified their company of same.

RATACZAK stated that approximately 5 to 10 minutes after the last contact with subject at 8:05 p.m., they heard and felt an oscillation of the aircraft and commented at the time that the hijacker could have departed, causing the unusual vibration since there had been no change in flight altitude, speed or any other external force which would account for this sudden oscillation. They telephoned the company representative, PAUL SODERLIND, in Minneapolis shortly thereafter, and stated that the oscillation, which could have been the hijacker's departure, would have occurred between 8:05 p.m. and their call to SODERLIND 5 or 10 minutes later, the exact time which would be recorded in the company log.

RATACZAK stated that they had not yet reached Portland proper but were definitely in the suburbs or immediate vicinity thereof.

RATACZAK added that the stipulations made for the reception of the aircraft at Reno, Nevada, were based on the same instructions that the hijacker had previously furnished prior to the landing at Seattle and no member of the crew departed from the cockpit to check on the presence of the hijacker following the arrival in the compartment of hostess MUCKLOW who had locked the door behind her.

RATACZAK added that it had not occurred to them at the time, but they could have pinpointed their exact location at the time the oscillation was felt and admitted that the crew had emergency exits from the pilot's compartment via the windshields and a rope ladder. Conceivably, following the departure of the passengers and during one of the periods that hostess MUCKLOW was off the plane obtaining the parachutes, the remainder of the crew could have vacated the aircraft leaving the hijacker on board alone.