

Jet with 57 Flies to Cuba ^{T-1} 6-26-69

MIAMI (AP) — A United Air Lines DC8 jetliner with 57 persons aboard was hijacked to Cuba Wednesday shortly after takeoff on a nonstop flight from Los Angeles to New York, the Federal Aviation Administration said.

A United spokesman said the pilot radioed he was heading for Cuba while over Riverside, Calif., 16 minutes after the plane left International Airport at 6:09 p. m. CDT. The pilot said he had sufficient fuel and would reach Havana's Jose Marti Airport about midnight.

Thomas Anderson, FAA watch supervisor at Miami, said the pilot requested "radar vectors to Cuba" and was following a course which would take it over the Gulf of Mexico.

"We received absolutely no information from the crew

about the hijacker," said FAA chief Merle W. Hunter at Miami.

United officials in New York said passengers included a number of United sales personnel headquartered in New York. The flight was scheduled to arrive at Kennedy International Airport at 10:55 p.m.

Captain on the flight was E. Nibur of New York City. The airline said the terse radio transmission simply asked for a routing to Cuba, and gave no details on the hijack.

Crewmen were identified as W. Erb, first officer; J. Lazar, second officer; E. M. Peckman, P. A. Redner, D. J. Marshall, S. A. Whalen and Melinda Harwood, stewardesses. All but Miss Harwood, of Los Angeles, were based in New York.

The hijacking was the 31st to Cuba this year. To date, 1,611

persons—passengers, crewmen and hijackers—have made the unscheduled trip in 1969.

It was United's second hijacking. The first was Jan. 12 when a flight from Jacksonville to Miami with 20 aboard was pirated. Robert McRae Helmy of Savannah, Ga., was charged.

The last hijacking was only this past Sunday, when an Eastern DC8 flight from Newark to Miami with 89 aboard was hijacked by a middle-aged Cuban man with his wife and miniskirted daughter in tow.

It was the second hijacking in a week from the West Coast. On June 17 a Trans World Airlines jet with 87 aboard was hijacked over Nevada on a flight from Oakland to New York. The hijacker was identified by the FBI as Willie Lee Brent, a former Black Panther.