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2441 Columbus Street  
New Orleans, Louisiana  
January 15, 1963

Mr. Malcolm McIntyre, President  
Eastern Air Lines Incorporated,  
New York City, N.Y.

Dear Sir:

I am Eric Crouchet. I was supposed to have been the State Witness in criminal charges in Louisiana against your Captain David Ferrie. I am writing this letter for three main reasons. I want to exonerate Captain Ferrie. Also I want to complain about the way Eastern Air Lines is treating him, and the way I been treated.

I tried to exonerate him before to your Captain Greiner, but he would not give me the chance. So I am writing to you since you are the president of the company.

Here is what happened. There is a certain woman here in New Orleans who has relatives who are big politicians. This woman is a real one, believe me. I am no doctor but I am sure something is not right with her. She has been "after" Captain Ferrie for a long long time. She has cooked up more stories and lies than I can count. Of course he is not the only one. She has some more on her list that she gives it to, and I am one of them. What she has got against me or Captain Ferrie I cannot figure out. She has a funny pattern. This month it is one person she doesn't like and next month it is somebody else. She figures she is the hand of God or something and runs around judging people and then goes after them. She brought this mess on.

Her own family has trouble with her. One of her sons ran away from home. This embarrassed her. She had to blame somebody. It was Captain Ferrie's turn. She even called Eastern and told them this. It just was not so. But how do you stop a lie when it is repeated often enough and loud enough. Anyhow after a few days it became apparent that she was wrong and Captain Ferrie knew nothing about her son running away. Captain Ferrie threatened to sue her for what she was saying that was his mistake.

The next thing I know I am dragged in to it. I am not surprised because I know what she has been saying about me for so long. Some cops picked me up and roused me around awhile. They gave me a paper to sign. I signed it. I should not have but I did. I was so scared I would have signed anything just to get out. I was sixteen going on seventeen. I did not know what I had signed. So I was shook when I found out a few days later that I was supposed to be State Witness against Captain Ferrie in criminal charges. Then I was in contact with Captain Ferrie and had arrangements to get papers from his lawyer withdrawing the charges. In a moment of courage I signed these. Then I called the cops and told them what I did and why. For this they charged Captain Ferrie with intimidating witnesses.

Another thing. They picked up some kid (first they called him Dumas) whose name is McClendon. My father and I talked to them a few weeks ago. They claimed they knew nothing about the case. The cops were trying to make this kid be a witness against Captain Ferrie too. This is how it went. This woman, like I said, has big political connections.

When I signed these withdrawal I was roused around again. Then I got real scared. I had no way to turn. I was scared of this woman, of the cops, and whether Captain Ferrie would sue me for false charges or what. So I did the only thing left and took off for service.

The service taught me my rights and what to be afraid of and what not. When I came home a couple of months ago I knew my rights. With my father and my lawyer I went to the District Attorney and explained the whole situation. They had no other choice than to drop the charges.

I want to make one thing clear. All of these charges are false. It just did not happen. I am completely exonerating Captain Ferrie.

I went to your Captain Greiner in New Orleans and I telephoned your Miami lawyer Bill Bell. With each one I tried to tell my story and I got the brush off. Why wouldnt they let me tell the story? They stopped me. Then I got to hear some mighty interesting things. It seems that Eastern is trying to collect only the dirt, and forget the good. What they have somebody wants to twist just one certain way. It all builds up to one thing And that is this it looks like Eastern has joined this women to blacken Captain Ferrie. I also found out that either Bill Bell or George Greiner tried to fire Ferrie when these charges were first made. Does this mean that just to have somebody accuse you of something is grounds for dismissal on Eastern? If it does Eastern is in bad shape, and so is the country.

I mean to get my say in this matter. If I dont get it in to you I will have to find another way. I am anxious to get it in now because there is a company called Southern Research, some kind of private detectives that are going around and admit they are just trying to "get" Captain Ferrie. They claim they are employees of Eastern Air Lines.

Here is the other side of Captin Ferrie you ought to know. First he is a loyal American and Christian. In CAP and other activities he has done his best to help wandering kids. He helps them get on the straight road. He encourages education and religion. HE is one of few adults who do this. The rest just talk about their civic duties to the young and never do anything about it.

Second he is aviation minded. He encourages kids to aviation and to the Space Age. He was talking about rockets a long time ago when his fellow pilots laughed at him for it. Some of your pilots today he trained.

Third he is a good pilot. I have been talking out at New Orleans Airport. I find he has the best reputation o the Gulf Coast as an instrument pilot and everybody agrees that they would want him, before anybody else, at the controls.

Fourth he is safety minded. Every ody knows how he trained his own copilots and stewardesses in safety and emergency measures, and on his own time.

Five he is company minded because he is always running around giving public talks for Eastern and on his own time and money.

Six when everybody was too chicken to move he got food clothing medicine and housing for Cuban refugees. Yet some loyal "patriots" on Eastern air lines criticised it.

Seven he never disgraced your company. He did not get fined and have his name in the paper for jeopardizing your flights. I read in the paper where 13 other captains got fined for having the stewardess in flight with passengers aboard. They are still flying. Don't you think Captain Ferrie should be too?

It is a funny thing how when a man is down everybody gangs up on him. If they are jealous of him they do the same thing too. So I have been doing my best to undo the wrongs done him of which I am a part. I thought Eastern would be interested in the same thing if they were Christian and American. So far, it seems the other way around.

I have been going around to some business men I know through the Kiwanis club. I have been telling my story to get this man's name cleared. I understand that these are the customers who pay your salary. One thing I can say, they showed a good attitude. They cannot believe that Eastern would hold him out of service once this story was told./

This affair has made me very angry with Eastern Air Lines. I figured that a man in your position would not want this to go on. I preferred to think that this was just the conduct of a couple of minor officials and did not represent the policy of the whole company. The future will tell.

There are many people here who want to come forward and write letters of protest. They have been stopped because someone told them that if they did it would look "rigged up". Do you want to hear from them. I hope you do.

There is one other thing. My name has been linked up to this. We cannot afford a lawyer to go after the woman who started all this. Her day will come, however. The other day I found that if Captain Ferrie does not get back to flying status my name will suffer too. I don't think Eastern is interested in this responsibility too.

So, I hope that you will do the right thing, and the American thing, and put Captain Ferrie back on flying. I would like to know what you are going to do.

Yours truly,

  
Eric M. Crouchet