

The death of Mrs. E. Howard Hunt Jr. in the UAL Flight 553 crash at Midway Airport in Chicago on Dec. 8 was not reported in SF Bay Area local papers seen until the Chronicle of Tuesday, Dec. 12.

That was an LA Times dispatch from Chicago quoting sources in Washington as saying \$225,000 in life insurance in her name had been taken out at Washington National Airport, and that the heavy flight insurance was under investigation by the Justice Dept. The story said the maximum insurance sold for passengers by Tele-Trip Co. Inc. is \$300,000. The policy cost \$7.50. ~~Beneficiary not learned.~~

NY Times of 9Dec72 says the plane was approaching Midway under a 500-foot ceiling with one mile visibility. The area had been covered with thin fog, rain and some snow all day.

The same story indicates ~~just~~ toward the end that FAA control tower operators at Aurora, Ill., said their transmissions indicated that there were no "irregularities" reported in the plane's approach. However in the 1st few paragraphs a surviving passenger, Marvin Anderson, is quoted as saying that the last words the pilot spoke to the passengers was to say they were at 4,000 feet and "everything is going well." "I was sitting on the left side of the plane alone, near the wind and two rows from an emergency ~~exit~~ exit," Anderson continues. "Just a few seconds after the pilot's announcement I knew something was wrong because he started to rev the engines. The plane was only about one-third full, and when I heard the engines revving I thought, 'He's in trouble and I'm in trouble,' but I didn't have time to think of much else."

Anderson's account suggests that the pilot may have realized too late how low he was, which could mean a faulty or sabotaged altimeter.

#### Possible precedents:

Crash of private plane June 19, 1964 near Northampton, Mass., in which Sen. Edward M. Kennedy and Sen. Birch Bayh and his wife were injured and the pilot and Kennedy's aide, Edward Moss, were killed. A UPI dispatch in the NY Times for 22June64 said air traffic controllers said there was no indication of trouble before the crash.

An AP dispatch dated 29June64 quoted Massachusetts director of aeronautics Crocker Snow as saying the plane may have been flying "at altitudes lower than those required for safe clearance of high terrain in the vicinity." The story said he made no reference to "the possibility raised by CAB investigators that faulty instruments may have been involved in the crash." A UPI ~~version~~ version of the same story on 30June64 printed in the San Francisco Examiner quotes the Massachusetts Aeronautics Commission's report as saying it was "possible but unlikely" that the twin-engined plane experienced "partial or complete ~~failure~~ ~~failure~~ power failure" which resulted in a flight path not completely under the control of the pilot as he approached Westfield Airport and came down in an apple orchard 3.3 miles short of his target.

Crash of a chartered Lear Jet on 9May1970 near Pellston, Mich., in which UAW president Walter Reuther and his wife were killed. Landing at night in rain and fog, the plane came down short of the airport and burned.

An AP dispatch in the NY Times for 16July70 says the altitude shown on the captain's altimeter was 1,460 feet. The crashed occurred at 800 feet above sea level.

On 19Feb71 UPI reported in the NYTimes and SF Chronicle

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that the National Transportation Safety Board reported the altimeter was defective, with some parts missing "and one part installed upside down."

Only two days before, Reuther had sent a telegram to President Nixon protesting the invasion of Cambodia. He was the highest ranking labor leader to do so, and was emerging an obvious rallying point for labor elements opposed to George Meany's blanket endorsement of Nixon's policies.

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Re Mrs. Hunt, note NY Times story <sup>3</sup> July 72 quoting Spanish embassy officials in Washington (where she worked) as saying she had told them ~~her husband~~ as late as the latter part of May that her husband was still working at the White House. The embassy let her go from her part-time translating job on ~~July~~ 1 July. *(you have 2 copies)*

The next day, 4 July 72, the Times said she had cut short a vacation in Spain following her husband's involvement in the 17 June Watergate incident and returned to Washington on June 26. The 3 July story had said she had returned on 20 June, but ~~her~~ her friends said this was in error. They attributed to her statements to the effect that when the FBI interviewed her she got the idea they weren't looking for her husband at the time and were interested chiefly in her personal and professional activities. The reason the friends gave for her cutting short her European ~~vacation~~ vacation was bad weather in Europe, and the need to return to take care of two of the Hunt children after he telephoned her he was leaving the Washington area because of "harrassment."

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