

Hijacker's Target: The White House

By Jim Landers

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Samuel Joseph Byck, the unemployed salesman who killed two men and himself in an aborted attempt to hijack a jetliner at Baltimore-Washington International Airport last Friday, had planned to crash-dive the plane into the White House, according to columnist Jack Anderson.

Anderson, in his syndicated column today, says that Byck described his plan as "Operation Pandora Box" in a tape recording mailed to Anderson "a few hours before the attempted hijacking."

Byck, 44, shot to death an airport policeman as he forced his way aboard a Delta Airlines DC-9 jet Friday morning, then wounded the plane's pilot and fatally shot the copilot before shooting himself. The FBI said Byck had carried a crude gasoline bomb concealed in a small suitcase on to the plane.

A police investigator, Lt. Bernard Kiessling of the Anne Arundel County police, said yesterday that evidence available to him indicates that Byck apparently had planned to fly to the White House, although "we have nothing in hard fact to indicate what he wanted to do beyond that."

Letters mailed Friday by Byck, who lived in Philadelphia, were printed yesterday by two Philadelphia newspapers, the Inquirer and the Daily News, and by the Detroit Free Press. They accused the U.S. government of attempting to take "complete control over us all" and one included a poem that started: "There once was a man from

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Philly, who chose to die defiantly rather than in his sleep . . ."

In his column, which appears on Page B15 of today's edition of The Washington Post, Anderson quoted Byck as saying on the tape:

"I will try to get the plane aloft and fly it towards the target area, which will be Washington, D.C., the capital of the most powerful, wealthiest nation of the world.

"By guise, threats or trickery, I hope to force the pilot to buzz the White House—I mean, sort of dive towards the White House. When the plane is in this position, I will shoot the pilot and then in the last few minutes try to steer the

plane into the target, which is the White House."

On the morning of the hijack attempt, President Nixon had a morning meeting at the White House with economic advisers George P. Schultz, Roy L. Ash, John T. Dunlop and Herbert Stein.

Byck was arrested twice last year during a one-man picketing campaign at the White House that called for President Nixon's impeachment.

Jack Warner, spokesman for the U.S. Secret Service, said on Friday that Byck had been investigated during the 1972 election campaign for allegedly making threats on the President's life. Warner said then the investigation was resolved in January of last year, when the U.S. attorney's office in Philadelphia declined to prosecute after Byck was committed to Philadelphia General Hospital for mental observation.

On Feb. 17, a Sunday, an Army private stole a helicopter from Ft. Meade, and landed it on the White House lawn in a hail of gunfire from guards, most of whom were armed with shotguns. President Nixon was not in the White House at the time.

On the following day, four days before the hijacking attempt, Byck called the Philadelphia Inquirer to discuss the newspaper's account of the helicopter incident.

According to the account of Dan Lynch, the Inquirer reporter who spoke to Byck, "In the conversation, (Byck) said, 'Not 10 guys in the country hate Nixon more than I do.'"

Lynch said Byck ended their conversation by saying, "I may have something for you. I'm not ready to break it now."

In his column, Anderson says Byck planned an attack on the White House weeks before the helicopter episode and that Byck recorded the tape "alone in his room in North Philadelphia," starting on Jan. 14 and ending on Jan. 23.

Anderson said Byck's former wife, who divorced him in September, identified Byck's voice on the tape recording.

Renee Goldstein, who lived in an apartment below Byck in Philadelphia and a person who Byck often talked with, specu-

lated to a Washington Post reporter on Saturday, "The only thing that I could see may be that (Byck) was planning to hijack the plane and use the bomb to force the pilot to crash into the White House."

Renee D. Loftin, 39, Ft. Worth, Tex., pilot of the Delta jetliner, remained hospitalized in critical condition yesterday in Baltimore. Killed in the hijack attempt were airport policeman George N. Ramsburg, 24, of Simpsonville, Md., and copilot Freddie D. Jones, 32, Dallas, Tex.