

PSA Jet Hijacked To Cuba

SFChronicle

A.P. & U.P.

Tampa, Fla.

A California commuter flight was hijacked to Cuba yesterday by a man and woman who apparently smuggled a shotgun on the plane hidden in their baby's cradle.

In just under 12 hours, the Pacific Southwest Airlines jet flew from the West Coast to Tampa, then to Havana and finally back to Miami.

During the refueling stop in Tampa, the black hijackers vainly sought a plane capable of taking them to Africa.

PONYTAIL

Authorities said the hijack began at 12:30 a.m. when a man jumped out of his seat, grabbed a stewardess by her ponytail, pushed the shotgun in her back and forced her to accompany him to the cockpit.

Meanwhile, the authorities said, the woman hijacker held a pistol on the passengers with one hand while cradling the baby in her other arm.

For most passengers, the first indication that anything was wrong aboard the plane came when the woman hijacker's voice suddenly crackled across the public address system:

"Everybody look forward or somebody's going to get shot."

COMPANION

In the same instant her 6-foot-3 male companion, wearing a lime-colored sweater, barged up the aisle, roughly jerking the stewardess along by her pony tail.

"Get moving, you bitch," he snarled.

"The guy kept repeating, 'I ain't jiving (fooling) you,'" Charles Wright, a 26-year-old passenger from San Francisco, recalled.

At another point, the hijacker announced:

"Any m— — moves, you all die."

Another passenger, 24-year-old Lynn Thomas, said one long-haired youth didn't move but the hijacker "hit him in the stomach with the butt of the shotgun" and called him a "hippie."

The hijackers let the 138
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passengers off the plane in Los Angeles. Remaining aboard were ten crew members — three flight officers and seven stewardesses.

The red, white and silver plane touched down at Havana's Jose Marti Airport at 10:01 a.m.

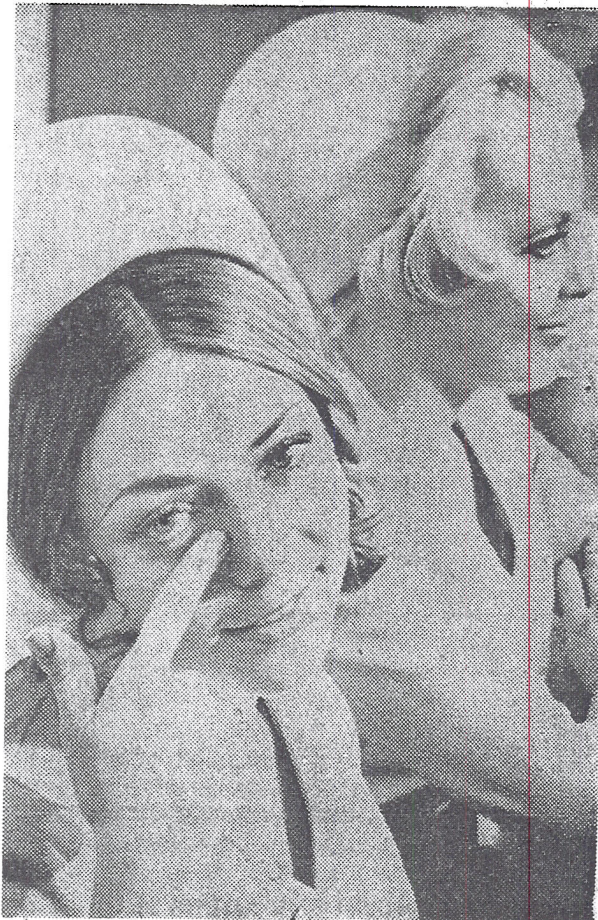
Pacific Southwest Airlines is an intrastate carrier that operates only in California.

CHARTS

As the craft was being refueled in Tampa, the hijacker said he wanted a plane capable of going to Africa. He also demanded aeronautical charts.

A jeep trailing a 12-foot ladder carried the charts — of the U.S. East Coast and the northwest coast of Africa — to the plane. They were handed up to the cockpit on the end of a pole.

At the time the plane landed in Tampa, airport officials said, there was no aircraft on hand capable of going to Africa. The FBI, which was to make the decision on the plane, was attempting to get closer to the Boeing '727 when the craft suddenly took off and headed for Cuba.



UPI Telephoto

STEWARDESS DIANNE BEIGHLEY (LEFT)
Hijacker held shotgun to her nose