

KPFA, Berkeley
6:30 p.m. news

14 June 1973

Announcer: Legal researcher Sherman Skolnick testified Wednesday before a special session of the National Transportation Safety Board about the possibility of sabotage in the plane crash that killed Dorothy Hunt. Officials said that she was carrying \$10,000 in \$100 bills when a United Air Lines jet crashed at Chicago's Midway Air Port last December 8. Skolnick alleged she also carried \$40,000 in cash which could be traced to convicted Watergate conspirator Bernard Barker, ~~\$1 million~~ \$2 million in traveller's checks and money orders stolen from the Committee to Re-Elect the President, and documents which Skolnick said the Hunts threatened to use to impeach President Nixon.

He also named several members of what he called the gas lobby as passengers and said these men had documents linking former Attorney General John Mitchell with Watergate. A ~~The~~ Transportation Safety Board hearing on the crash was originally held earlier this year. Using data from this hearing, Skolnick displayed several charts and said they revealed a coverup of the crash investigation. He said the control towers at Midway and O'Hare International Airport erred in guiding the United jet to its destination, and the board erred in its simulated replay of the crash. Skolnick also said the electrical systems on the jet had malfunctioned, which prevented the crew from avoiding the crash in a residential section on the southwest side. He charged the electrical system was tampered with by people who planned sabotage.

Shortly after the crash, White House aide Dwight Chapin took an executive position with United Air Lines in Chicago. One of his duties was representing the air line at the Transportation Safety Board hearing on the crash. Skolnick was not allowed to testify at these original hearings held in February and March. Skolnick also said he had information that safety board head John Reed had complained to acting FBI director William Ruckelshaus that the FBI agents interfered with the crash investigation. Ruckelshaus replied that the FBI has "primary investigative jurisdiction in cases of possible sabotage." He said that 20 hours of investigation "produced no evidence of sabotage."

[end of item]